The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

SUMMER 1954

Yukon River Transport

Rosemary Gilliat

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Clifford Wilson, Editor

Last sternwheeler on the Saskatchewan, the "David N. Winton" — Ted Tadda

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ENTER the EUROPEAN

IV - Among the Indians of Canada

by H. B. Hawthorn

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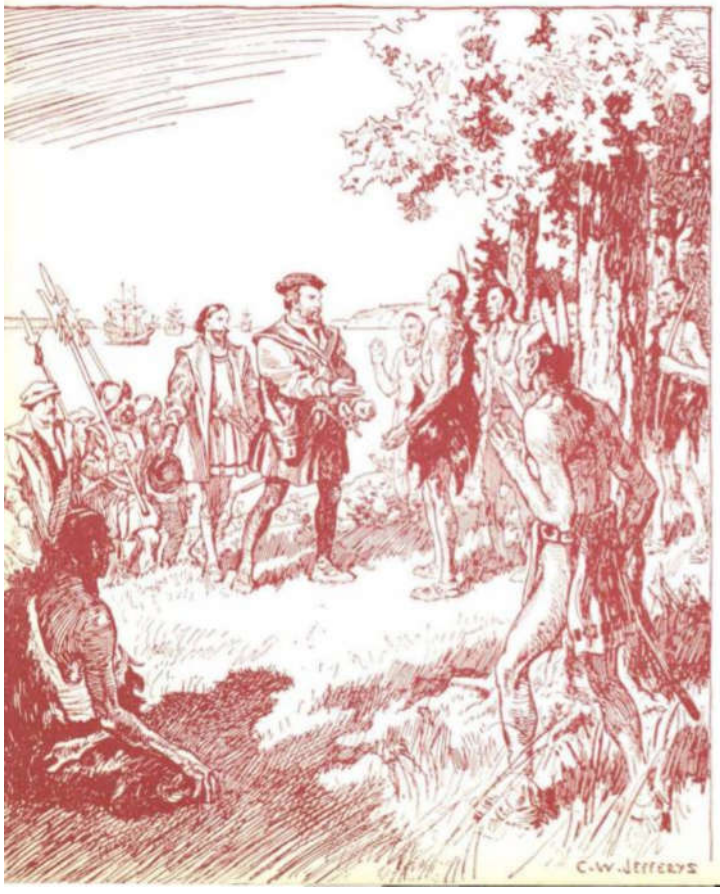
This is the fourth of a series of articles on the contacts of white men with the aborigines of the New World.

I do not want to be turned into a white man. I want to be Indian till the end of this world." This was written to a Parliamentary Committee in 1946 by Blair Peter of Shulus Indian Reserve, British Columbia. Yet, as chief, he is a community official chosen not according to pre-white custom but by a system of election prescribed in the Indian Act to provide for democratic local government. Although he does not vote in Federal elections, he is submitting his opinions to this committee of the national government sitting 2000 miles from his home. He is already schooled and literate and states that for the children, he wants "more and more education." In education, jobs, and a host of other things, Blair Peter and his community are now inseparable from the rest of Canada. His descendants cannot remain Indian in any sense of the word for very much longer.

Jacques Cartier makes friends with the Huron-Iroquois at Quebec, 1535.



It was less than three and a half centuries ago that a handful of French soldiers, fishermen and priests met the fringe of the native population of Canada, in the St. Lawrence Valley. From there to the Arctic Circle and to the Pacific Ocean were about 200,000 Indians in numerous communities, large and small, wandering and settled, of many differing languages and cultures. Only gradually, in New France, the Maritimes and Upper Canada, moving westward and northward into the prairies and northern woods, and travelling by sea or over mountain range to the west coast, did the French and English come to outnumber them. They came upon them under varying circumstances and conditions. At times their aid was sought as guides or allies; at times their produce, of food or furs. Yet whatever the manner of the meetings and subsequent relations, whether the Indians were displaced from their lands, fitted into the new economies, or put in competition for jobs and markets, the influence of the white invasion on their lives was everywhere profound.

In the St. Lawrence Valley and in the Maritimes, hunting Algonkians met French and English scarcely more literate than they, for the great achievements of European art and letters were not embodied in the ordinary settler and fisherman, and the levels of technical skill of the newcomers and natives were much the same. Inter-marriage was common. In fur-trapping, in war and in exploration, the newcomers usually sought the co-operation of the native hunters, and gained it by means of trade in weapons, utensils, pigments and cloths. Co-operation with the more numerous natives was impressed on the early French and English by their own weakness, and later by their own

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De Maisonneuve fights with the Iroquois at Montreal, 1644.

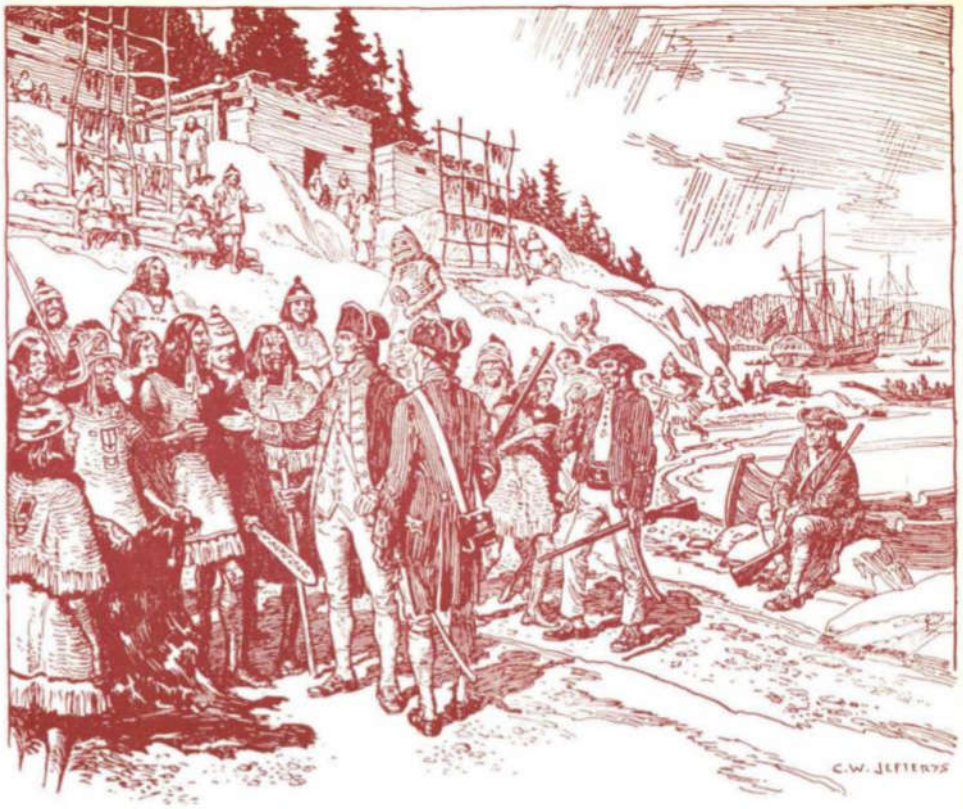
rivalry. In some ways, it was also a matter of ethics and choice, and in the early years of New France, both to the missionaries and to the governor, the Indian was a soul to be saved and a child of nature to be nurtured into a Frenchman.

Cooperation and the fur trade affected the Indian's cultural stability more than did the attempts at conversion, or the later antagonism and conflict. The early programmes of "bible and plough" for achieving the twin ends of conversion and assimilation were not successful even for the day and age, but by fitting in with the fur trade the Indian altered the economy of community life, inserting a new individualism into it, and developing needs for textiles, weapons and utensils he could not manufacture. Furthermore his exposure to new diseases meant that his social framework had to be quickly readjusted in the face of a declining population.

The years that followed showed a progressive breakdown of Indian life, soon related to dwindling resources as well as to altered techniques and to disease. The later dominance of the Anglo-Americans introduced some new factors and changed the balance of the old ones. Solicitude for the Indian as a soul became a motive less in evidence. But a new solicitude was evidenced in a proclamation issued by George III in 1763 which recognised Indian rights in land. As a result of the proclamation, a system of treaty or land surrender was devised, which permitted the peaceful settlement of most of the arable and grazing land of Canada by the whites. The spreading influence of the fur trade—which in many frontier areas meant that the first whites were regarded as benefactors bringing the goods needed to make life less rigorous, and later reduced in Indian eyes the importance of lands suitable for farming—played its part in enabling the settlement to take place. For the whites, the peaceful nature of this process was a boon. In comparison with the parallel displacement and confinement of Indians elsewhere in the Americas around the same period, it was relatively painless for the Indians also.

Yet the milder pain has been long-continued. Many Indians misunderstood the meaning of the original land surrender, and their resentment at being relegated to reserves and controlled by white guardianship still abides. In the submissions to the Parliamentary Committee in 1946, band after band protested that they should enjoy greater freedom in hunting for food and trapping for furs, freedom especially from provincial game laws, rights to use trap lines outside the reserves, and the extension of their reserves as well. Of course, in these days of developed land and carefully conserved remnants of wildlife, the request is not a reasonable one, nor does it come reasonably from people whose food and jobs derive mainly from modern agriculture and industry. Yet nostalgia is almost by definition unreasonable, and the resentment which is indicated by the protests is understandable enough.

More difficulties persist from another early error, still unrectified. This was the insistence that there must be in each Indian community some responsible individual who could agree to land surrender and to other matters on behalf of the group. Yet in many Indian cultures executive power was of a shifting nature, vested in some men for war, vested in others at different times of the year and for special purposes. None of these purposes covered transfer of land, and in none of these groups was there anyone who could be deemed capable of giving the group's assent to an alienation of land forever. But representatives who could make decisions on this and on other new matters were



Captain Cook meets the Nootka, Vancouver Island, in 1778.

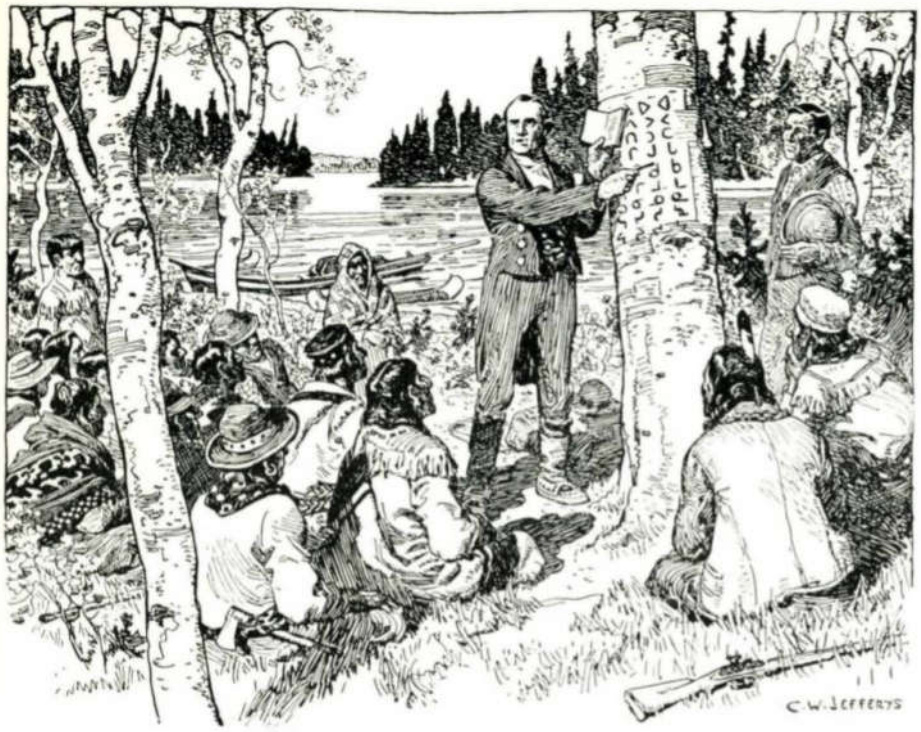
needed by the officials, traders and missionaries. To these newcomers, the rather autocratic political forms of their world were the forms which seemed desirable. Accordingly a new type of chief was created, by their insistence and recognition. Seldom were these appointed chiefs able to operate successfully, nor in spite of the democratic, elective framework encouraged in later years by the Indian Act have forms evolved which are well suited to give political expression in the Indian communities.

The timing of white penetration and settlement, the nature of Indian thought and society, and of the white's uses for a region, were keys to the ways the first meetings and subsequent contacts turned out. The western and northern tribes fared differently from those of the eastern plains and woodlands. In the prairies even earlier than the beginning of white settlement, the richness of the life of the semi-nomadic hunting tribes, whose possessions were formerly limited by the necessities of light travel, had increased with the acquisition of the horse and firearms. The same acquisitions were also the forerunners of the destruction of the bison. In the case of some western groups, the signing of the treaties coincided with the vanishing of this most important natural resource, so that their existence came to depend upon government welfare. Framework for a programme of welfare had been set up under an Indian Act passed in 1876, which gave expression to new principles of protection and advancement for the tribes. Practically, these found first expression in schools and agricultural supplies, pressure and guidance towards westernization, and checks to the exploitation of Indians by the now outnumbering whites.

The meeting of whites and Indians followed still another path on the west coast, where large native communities lived primarily on the yield of the sea and rivers, and had developed an elaborate and dramatic religion and social organization. They met eighteenth century Spanish, English and French explorers on a basis of general equality in power, and no very great inferiority in technical achievement. Goods acquired by trading furs during the succeeding century were employed in competitive striving for social status, a pursuit which became more frantic as epidemics left numerous vacancies in the traditional ranking. Later, settlement, missions, the imposition of Canadian government, and the allotment of reserves confined the west coast communities and altered the conditions of their already changing life. In most regions of British Columbia, land was not acquired by the process which applied elsewhere of recognising Indian use, by agreement and surrender, and the granting of reasonable reserves. The view prevailed that Indian livelihood depended on sea and river, and that the land could not be regarded as occupied. A complicated series of negotiations between Provincial and Federal Governments resulted in the granting of reserves, in most cases small, for the location of Indian dwellings.

To the north, in the regions of dwindling conifers and cottonwoods, still south of the Eskimo but bordering their territories, more thinly spread Athapascans and Algonkians lived by fishing and hunting, in smaller groups and with cultures less spectacular than those of the rest of the country. Whites came to the region but sparsely, their main interest of fur-buying favouring some continuance of the native mode of life. The situation has altered more slowly in these regions, changing with the individualization fostered by trapping and trade, and with the purchase of new equipment made necessary by the competition for the lessening supply of fur. More recently the modern developments of the mining and pulpwood industry have shown signs of a completer change of northern life, with the Indian filling some of the demands for skilled labour.

From such varied backgrounds and through these different types of meeting and cultural interchange come the present-day Indian cultures of Canada. Nowhere are the people in outward appearance very much like those seen by the first Europeans. Dress is everywhere assimilated to the local variants of national style, with some survivals such as buckskin jacket and moccasin, which are worn also by the white neighbours. Native languages persist, but almost everywhere English or French has at least an equal place, even in the home. The children, in overwhelmingly greater proportion, go to school, where



Rev. James Evans teaches the Cree his syllabic writing, 1841.

the course of studies is oriented to general Canadian life. Men work at jobs which fit them into the national economy.

For example, from Caughnawaga, in Quebec province, structural steelworkers travel to high construction jobs throughout the continent. Their skill is deservedly recognized, they earn high wages, and they belong to an international labour union. Some of their problems would surprise many Indians, and many other Canadians, too. L. E. Beauvais of this reserve stated to the Parliamentary Committee examining the Indian Act: "The taxation of Indians is possibly only a drop in the bucket for the government but it means a great deal to an Indian when his means are small. Certainly we are trying hard to imitate the white race to save for our old age, but what little we may have is taken away from us. I know of a case where a man had accumulated $135,000 in cash. The province of Quebec took $9,635 in succession duties."

In Ontario, Iroquois farmers on various reserves still depend in part on their corn crop, one of the crops they grew before the coming of the whites, but they cultivate it with tractor-drawn implements and use artificial fertilizers. The religion of some of these people is Longhouse, a reinterpretation of Iroquois belief under the stimulus of philosophical competition with Christianity. They are schooled and literate, and younger people are now likely to enter urban life, in business or a profession. Yet, speaking before the 1946 Parliamentary Committee, Reginald Hill of the Six Nations Reserve voiced the reluctance of many at the thought of losing band membership and official status as an Indian. He stated with regard to the provision for compulsory enfranchisement ". . . we resent feeling that the provision still exists there, and we are in a position of having something hanging over our heads by a thread, like the sword of Damocles, without knowing how long the thread is going to hold."

In the western prairies, the Blackfoot and other tribes now grow grain and raise cattle for national markets within the wall of a strong consciousness of Indian identity. They have long passed the period of hunger which followed the extermination of the bison. Perhaps they have not found another purpose as sure as that which belonged with the hunt and the warpath, the well-run social life, the creative beauty of their arts, and the intense religion of the pre-white culture. They themselves state their main current problem to be a need for responsibility and self-direction. They want to run their own show. "The Blackfoot Indians pay the salaries of all employees on this reserve with the exception of the Indian agent and one clerk, yet the Indians have no voice in the selection of these employees. In the transaction of tribal business, the Indian Agent should take the Indian more into his confidence," wrote Teddy Yellowfly for the tribal council.

On the Pacific Coast, commercial fishing has become the greatest field of employment of the Indian, who needs to own or lease a power boat, and may employ various electronic aids to navigation, communication and fish-finding. Thomas Gosnell of Port Simpson spoke before the Parliamentary Committee, with requests for aid in material progress: "There is a period of about six months during the winter season when there is no fishing . . . why could not the Indians build their own boats on the reserve in a cooperative way? Here is what we want. We want a sawmill in the larger villages; we want boat-building shops financed by the government.* These sawmills would also answer the housing problem on the reserve."

In all, the present-day population classed as Indian numbers about 145,000 and is increasing at a rate of 1.5 percent yearly. Intermixture has taken place, both biological and cultural, and is continuing. In some areas the conditions, aims and problems of the Indians are the same as those of their neighbours, except for their special status under the act. In other areas, they remain distinct, as a separate racial group, different in occupation, income level and social life. And in places their separation is accompanied by friction between white and Indian, by prejudiced ideas, and by discriminatory practices.

The assumption of responsibility for Indian welfare as expressed in the Indian Act of 1876 was not new even when the act was passed. It was first expressed by the French priests and army doctors, and early in the nine-

*See the article, "Boat Building Eskimos," on p. 52.

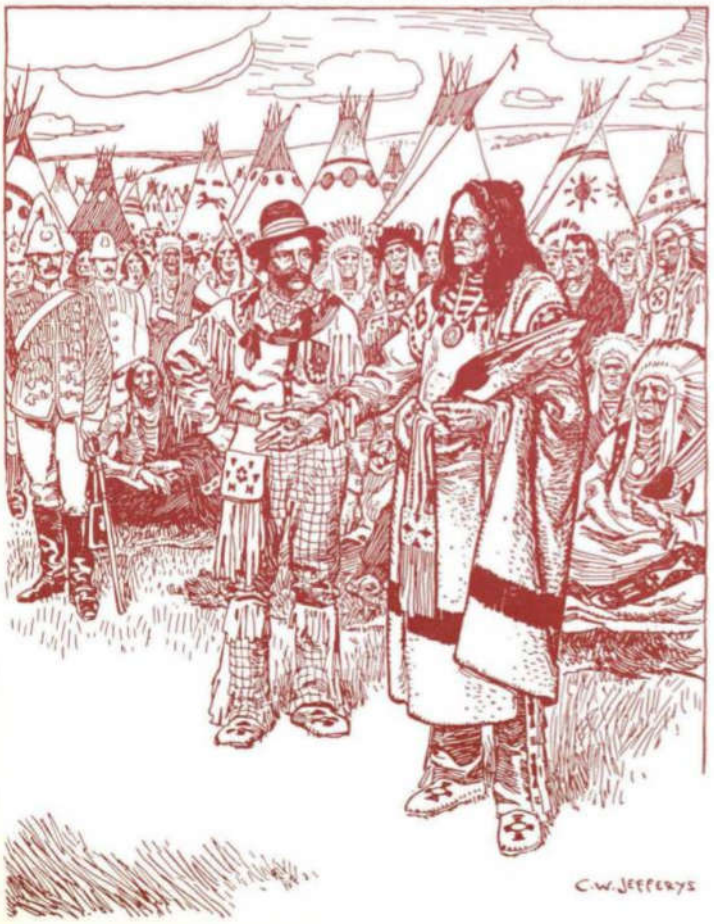
teenth century under the stimulus of British humanitarianism Indian welfare became a matter of general concern, before official policy developed the programmes of health, education and material advancement.

The positive efforts of administration and the struggles of the Indians themselves for re-adjustment, can be said to have taken a century or more to catch up with the negative influences, but now are definitely in the lead. Population figures and conditions of health are on the upswing. The present people, cared for by a large medical staff, including 65 full-time doctors, suffer less from the diseases which all but wiped out the Indian of earlier times. Hospitals and doctors are now available to most Indians fully as readily as to the average Canadian of other ancestry. On the other hand, they do not eat as well as in the past, because in developed areas the gathering of wild foods has necessarily halted, and educational campaigns for better nutrition have yet to obtain results.

The figures for schooling have taken on an impressive quality in the past decade. Compulsory schooling for children from seven to sixteen actually sees an attendance percentage of nearly ninety. The enrollment of Indian children has grown by 8,000 in ten years. The numbers in higher education and in vocational schools have grown from 71 to 1190 in the years 1945 to 1952.

In other welfare fields, pensions, family allowances, and housing improvement, Canadian democratic belief brings the Indian, usually with some lag in time, any benefits received by the general population.

The Blackfoot chief, Crowfoot, with the N.W.M.P. interpreter, Jerry Potts, at the treaty of 1877.



The present picture is far from being one of flawless Utopia. Some Indians still lack decent comfort and security, and many feel they lack freedom. At times even the outlook for improvement seems hopeless to the person most concerned. Many Indian villages can be recognized instantly by their down-at-heel look. The ambitious person living in them feels his way to improvement is blocked both by his neighbours and by regulations.

The department's policy of protection plus advancement is difficult to administer, and equally difficult for the Indian to accept. It necessarily poses a number of contradictions, especially at the point of assimilation. The claims of the Blackfoot that they want to run more of their own affairs actually show the near-success of the department's aim. So do a multitude of other "beefs" which plague the life of the conscientious, hardworking officials, whose moderate salaries leave ample room for more recognition and honour among the rewards for their efforts. Inevitably the Indians have gained, where they did not already possess it, our own intolerance of restraint and guidance, an intolerance which cannot bear to wait until everyone is sure that no guidance is needed. The department's protection, and the necessarily rather slow advancement of the majority of Indians, hinder some of the more ambitious and able. Friction between agency officials and band members is almost bound to increase rather than decrease from now on, with neither likely to take consolation from the fact that this shows the guardian is successfully winding up his job.

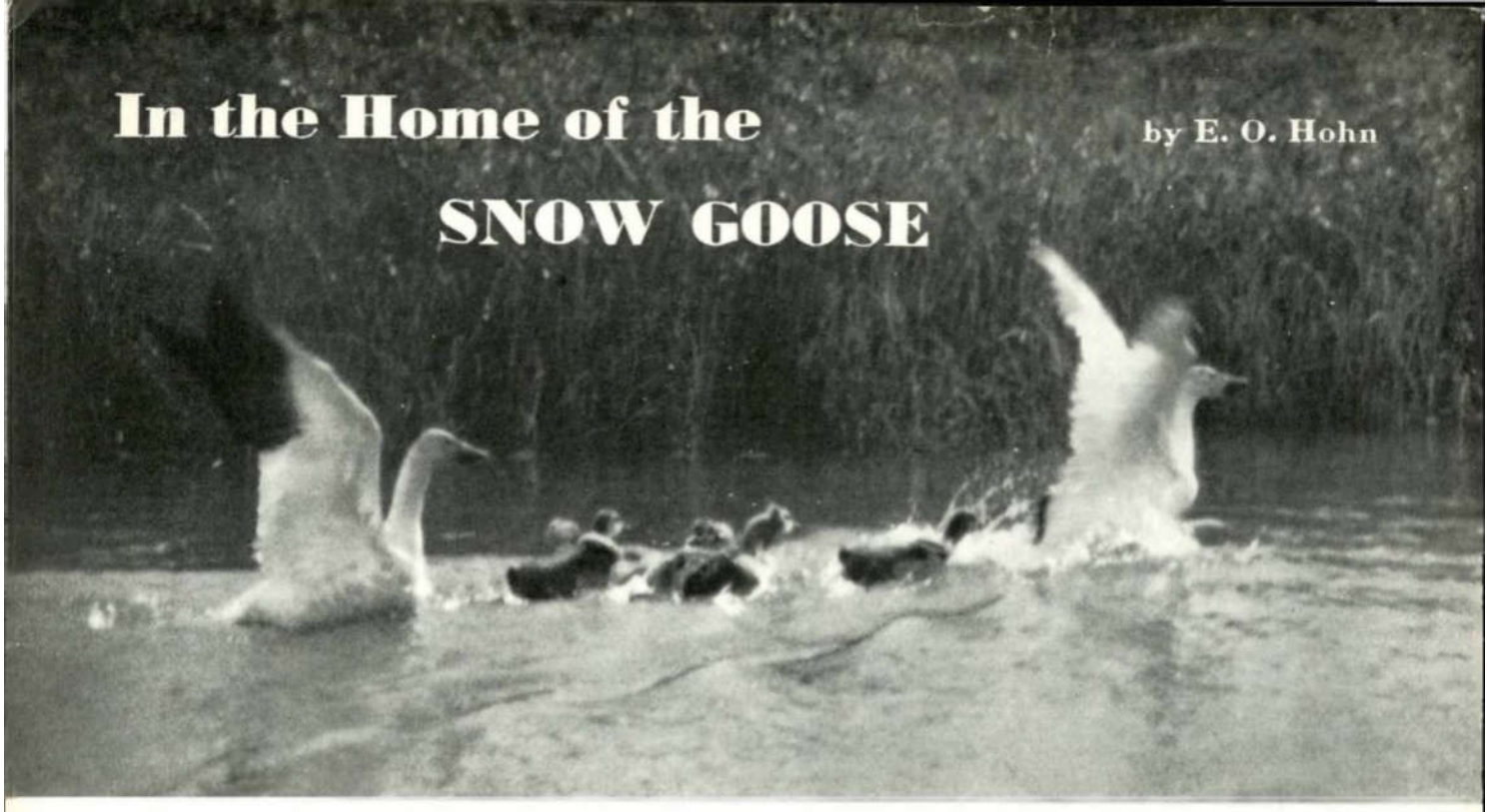
The result? The result will be an Indian who is an indistinguishable part of Canada except to the extent that physical inheritance will separate some for a while longer. Race mixture has already taken place to a considerable extent, and it has continued everywhere, though the recent nonsense of race purity held it back for some time from being respectable in many quarters. As the economic and educational level of the Indian approach more closely those of other Canadians, intermarriage will increase.

The Indian cultures have already changed. Their remnants are here today, as religions tenaciously followed, as languages and attributes of thought and personality, and as some elements of social organization. But each decade sees changes in the institutions of native life and individuals withdrawing from native communities.

Canada is a proselytizing nation. New Canadians must conform, and there is no question in the minds of any but a few old Indians that the first inhabitants must conform also to life in a highly literate, industrialized modern nation. Perhaps the task of operation of a complex nation is so great that no great amount of cultural diversity can be tolerated, though the person who values such diversity, who sees beauty and even evolutionary safety and survival value in different philosophies, arts and forms of social life will not cease to regret that this seems to be so. But for the Indians of Canada, such regret can find some practical expression only in recording and preserving the varied past in libraries and in museums. It cannot keep it alive, for the Canadian Indian is becoming a citizen. ◆

In the Home of the SNOW GOOSE

by E. O. Hohn



Lesser snow goose family. Lorene Squire

Last summer, on Banks Island, the author visited the largest single colony of geese in the Western Canadian Arctic.

AT the beginning of August, five years ago, I was standing on the sandspit at Baillie Island on the western arctic coast 200 miles east of Aklavik, yearningly looking across the sea toward Banks Island 100 miles away. Several natives had told me that countless numbers of waveys (lesser snow geese) nested on Banks Island. They conjured up in my mind the vision of a distant river valley in the rolling brown tundra, its flats white with huge flocks of snow geese and the air filled with their clamour. Further they added that a few blue geese could be seen on Banks Island. Now only four breeding places of the blue goose are known, the most westerly being Perry River; so if breeding of this species on Banks Island could be established it would extend its known nesting area about 500 miles further to the west. No wonder that Banks became my dream island which I yearned to visit as soon as possible! But Banksland remained a dream as far as I was concerned till last spring when I was able to fly to Sach's Harbour, the only native settlement on Banks Island, in an R.C.A.F. plane which was taking in T. H. Manning and his assistant Capt. Sparrow who were to do survey work there for the Defence Research Board.

At Sach's Harbour I had no trouble in arranging to live as a boarder with an Eskimo family whom I had met four years before, while they were on their annual visit to the mainland. We arrived on May 10, well before the geese or indeed any of the other migratory birds except snow buntings which are always early spring arrivals. It seemed difficult to believe that geese would be here before the end of May when on our arrival there was not a foot of snow-free ground to be seen and the sea was covered with several feet of ice. Yet only a week later Bertram Pokiak, one of our neighbours, came back from seal hunting at open water some miles offshore and reported that two flocks of waveys had passed over him heading for the shore. Next day on the 18th little Novaluk, one of the children playing out of doors, came running into the house calllng *kangut!*—Waveys—and indeed we could all hear their raucous *ga hak* calls outside, a sound which thrills every lover of the wilds when he hears it for the first time in spring.

Going outside I could see them, the first small flock winging its way over the sea ice towards us till they were nearly overhead, fine snow-white birds with pitch black wing tips. On the nearby southerly slopes of the coastal hills there were by now patches of snow-free grass and here next day I found some of them feeding. From now on they could be seen daily to mid-June, flocks appearing out of the grey sky over the sea ice, then following the shore northwestward to Cape Kellett or flying inland through some gap in the coastal hills cutting across overland towards their great breeding place about forty miles northeast of the settlement.

The peak of the passage occurred about May 28 when between one and two thousand birds passed over Sach's Harbour in a day. Twice I saw a single blue goose among a passing string of waveys. The goose passage continued till July 18, and during this period we had some good shooting.

E. O. Hohn is associate professor of physiology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

The procedure was to set up decoys made of snow with a cap of moss to imitate the dark bill, on a patch of bared ground. Then you would wait, lying on your face, till geese were heard or seen and then call vigorously as much like the birds themselves as you could manage. Again and again a passing flock would swing in towards you, circle and come gliding into the wind down towards the decoys. Soon they were overhead in fair range and there was your chance.

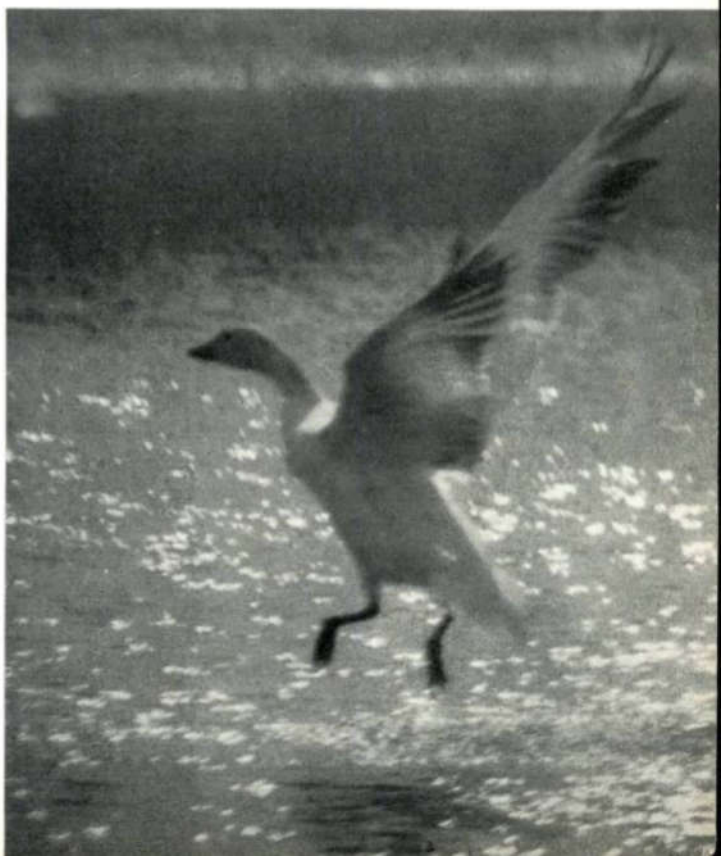
I was, of course, eager to visit the breeding colony, which had apparently never been visited by any white man —though one or two arctic fliers had seen it from the air— while there was still enough snow to make the trip by dog team. So at the end of May we set out from Sach's Harbour making a beeline for the Egg River to the northeast of us and about twenty-five miles inland from the coast. As soon as the coast range was left behind there was not a snow-free patch to be seen, yet there were signs of spring, for on one of the little hills we saw a pair of rough-legged hawks and in the first river valley to be crossed, where there was again a little snow-free ground, there was a pair of cranes. In the evening we reached the edge of the Egg River valley and there below us lay, not as in my recurrent vision —a brown summer landscape dotted with the blue of lakes and the meandering river—but a glistening snow landscape relieved only in spots by blotchy black masses of bare ground. My Eskimo companions were sure we would find that many goose eggs had already been laid, but it hardly seemed possible to me in these surroundings, and as the dogs trotted down the slope I was already thinking about a second later trip. However, when we got nearer to the patches of dark ground, there were certainly geese aplenty, and soon we found some eggs too.

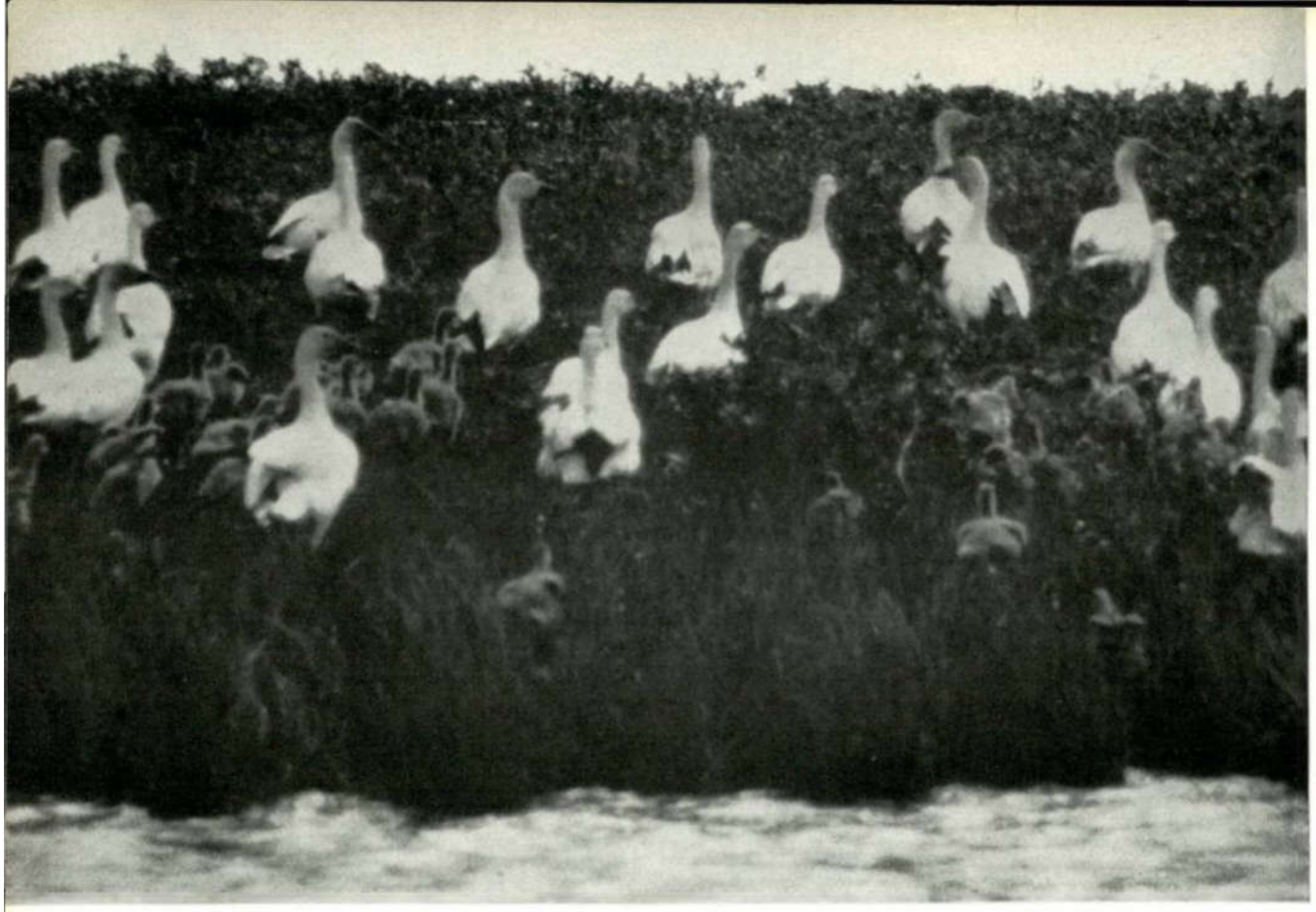
Next day, I was able to explore at leisure. The valley floor in general was still under snow, but here and there were sizeable areas consisting of many irregularly shaped patches of raised bared ground separated by what might be termed ditches which soon would hold water, but now were firmly floored by ice with a covering of snow. Geese were standing about in some thousands on these dark patches and perhaps a tenth of the breeding pairs present had starting laying. The nests consisted merely of circular ridges of dead grass on the mud enclosing one to five eggs, and containing also a variable amount of grey nest down which the birds pluck from their breasts. These were all early nests, and as incubation proceeded the amount of nest down was considerably increased. Many eggs simply lay completely exposed on the mud, the birds having apparently had no time to make even a scrape. Though some thousands of geese were on the patches of exposed ground, further thousands stood about in masses, as far as the eye could see along the valley floor, on unbroken snow fields, the surface of which was covered with their tracks in every direction. There were about 30,000 birds present and yet as my companions told me, only part of the nesting area was then occupied. When the colony is in full swing, I judge that about 100,000 birds must nest here. Certainly this is the largest single colony of geese in the western and perhaps the whole Canadian Arctic. In view of this great concentration of nesting birds, the eggs collected and the geese shot by the mere half dozen native families who generally trap on Banks Island can safely be regarded as insignificant.

I set up a blind near a group of goose nests hoping that the birds would soon get used to it and enable me to get some good photographs. However, even by next morning none of the geese were nearer the blind than forty yards and those owning the nearest eggs had apparently given them up. It was pretty clear that only when incubation was advanced would the pull of the nest be sufficient to make them overcome their aversion to a strange object. In view of this we decided against a prolonged stay here. During that day two blue geese were shot and made into scientific specimens on my return to Sach's Harbour and about six others were seen. So my trip confirmed the native report that blue geese come to Banks Island in the breeding season and there is little doubt, since we found them right in the nesting colony of their close relatives, the waveys, that a few pairs of blue geese nest there.

I hoped to get proof of this by making a second trip later, when after the general snow thaw I hoped to reach the goose colony on foot. I attempted this trip at the end of June but found the various rivers to be crossed still running and very swift. I crossed two of them, one I had to swim with rucksack and rifle on my back, and the dog pack which held my tent and sleeping bag on my head, and it seemed unwise to continue the trip alone. By the time I returned to Sach's Harbour, having tramped for a week, it was getting too close to the time of general departure for the mainland to make another attempt with a native companion.

Snow goose rising. Lorene Squire





Families of Lesser Snows in the Western Arctic. Lorene Squire

But to get back to our dog team trip to Egg River: on the return journey on June 2nd numerous travelling flocks of waveys with two more blue geese among them were still to be seen. Many of these geese must have felt just as I had done on first sight, that Egg River valley was no place to lay eggs as yet, for just about half of the flocks going overhead were coming away from the colony.

Soon after our return to Sach's Harbour I came across a striking example of the attachment of snow geese to their mates. Wandering about the flats across the mouth of the Sach's River, about a mile from the settlement, I spotted a dead wavey. We had been shooting near here two weeks before and this was obviously a bird wounded at that time (for there had been no goose hunting since), which had dropped too far away from us to be noticed. When I went to pick it up, to my amazement a live goose rose from a depression in the broken ground and reluctantly took to its wings as I approached. This bird had obviously been keeping guard by the corpse of its mate for the last two weeks, probably leaving it only for short periods to feed.

About a mile further away, in a grass marsh between two small lakes, I spotted the head of a sitting lesser snow goose. It walked off warily when I was still over 50 yards away but having marked the place I found the nest with five eggs lying in a cup of grey down. The nest was only 2 miles from Sach's Harbour so next day I returned and set up a blind for photography about ten yards from the nest. Even now in mid-June the ground had only thawed about three inches down and it was very difficult to drive in stakes for the guy ropes that supported the frame at each corner. The next question was, would the goose tolerate this structure so close to its nest without deserting? My friends of Sach's Harbour were quite sure I'd placed my blind too close to the nest and the bird would never come near it again.

The next day about noon I therefore approached the nesting area with some trepidation. Both birds were some distance from the nest feeding, but the eggs were warm so I felt fairly sure the bird had been incubating them since my visit of the day before. I set up my camera and crouched on the stool in the blind to wait. After half an hour I could see through the peep hole five geese feeding at the far end of the marsh. Three of these came nearer very slowly, but after another thirty minutes the nearest bird took wing and disappeared. This looked bad; but after another half-hour's wait, one bird approached and settled on the eggs, and I got my pictures.

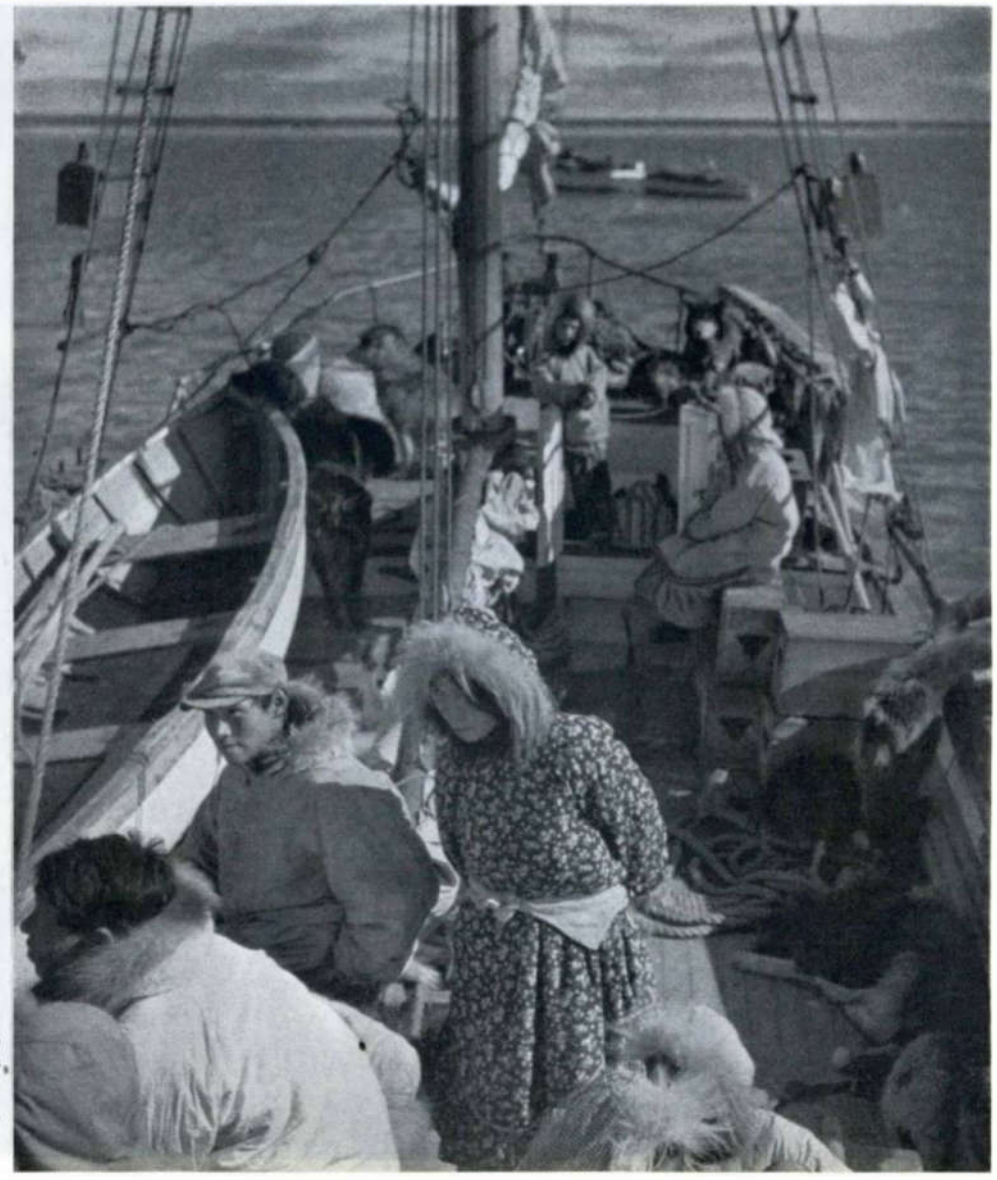
On June 27 I made my last visit to this nest. Both the old geese were there, and four of the five goslings with bright yellow-green down had hatched, while the last was still in the egg but had made a big crack in it and was cheeping vigorously. As I dismantled my blind the two parents slowly drew off with the four young to the nearby lake at the edge of which I deposited the incompletely hatched egg.

Early in July I came across two other pairs of Snow geese with their downy young by the Sach's River estuary.

One pair had seven youngsters, and as I came along the shore they took to the water with six of the young herded between the two parents and one remaining about twenty yards behind. Though he cheeped continually and followed, the rest never waited for him but swam steadily among the ice floes towards the opposite shore. When the lone youngster was about a quarter-mile from shore, a glaucous gull discovered him, took a sweep over him to have a close look, then came back upwind, stalled over him and dipped down. The gosling at once dived out of sight and the gull's swoop was unsuccessful. But the gosling was doomed. The gull came again and again, and on its fourth try it rose with the gosling dangling from its beak.

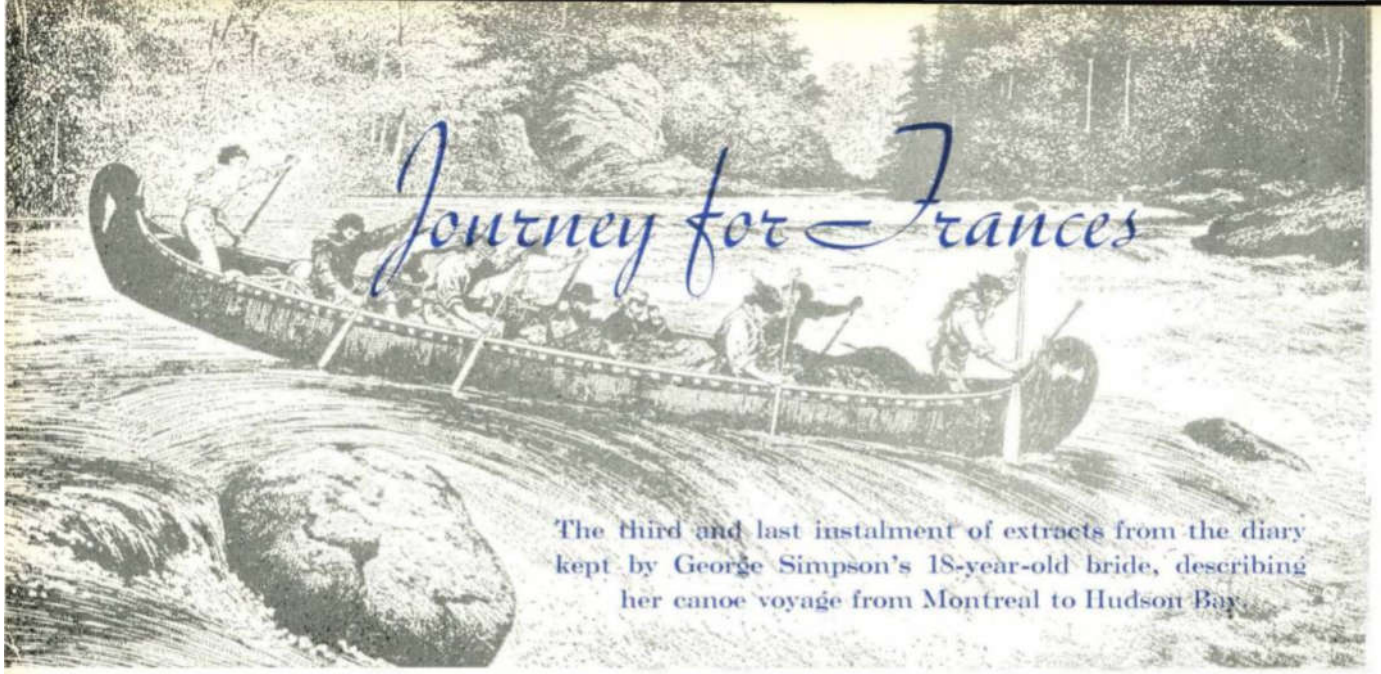
My last interesting encounter with the geese came in mid-July, when several hundred snow geese, unable to fly as they had lost their large wing feathers in the moult, were wandering about the nearby Kellett River valley. The Sach's Harbour natives rounded up a large flock and slowly drove them towards the settlement, the geese marching in a dense crowd just like a flock of domestic birds. The flock contained one blue goose and one Ross's goose, the only one I saw in my three months on Banks Island. I banded both these birds and over seventy waveys as well. As in three months I'd only seen one Ross's goose and the natives told me that they do not even see them every year, I have come to the conclusion that though Ross's geese almost certainly nest somewhere in the western Arctic, apart from Perry River, it is probably not on Banks Island, the very few occurring there being merely strays from a nesting ground on the mainland south of the island.

When the end of July came the Bankslanders prepared to make the trip to the mainland in two schooners; and so after a most rewarding stay on the island, I accompanied them to Aklavik, where I took a plane for the south. •



Eskimos on the way from Banks Island to Aklavik.

R. N. Hourde



Journey for Frances

The third and last instalment of extracts from the diary kept by George Simpson's 18-year-old bride, describing her canoe voyage from Montreal to Hudson Bay.

Introduction by Grace Lee Nute

JUST a month after Governor Simpson's party left Montreal in 1830, they were at the post on Rainy River that was soon to be named Fort Frances after the leader's bride, the diarist of the expedition. The days were lengthening in this north land, and night journeys down the Rainy River and beyond became even more the rule than they had been earlier on the trip. In most respects, however, the worst was over. Mrs. Simpson found Rainy River scenery as delightful as every British traveller seems to have regarded that stream.

Her account of the little oasis of civilization, the Red River Settlements, already nearly twenty years old, reveals her innate genuineness. No condescension in her remarks, only great curiosity and human interest are evident. She was quite in her element demonstrating to an uninitiated resident how fine canoe travel was. It may strike one as odd that Mrs. Simpson should have known so much more about canoes than the local parson's wife, but a later entry explains the matter. Boats, especially York boats, were the favored vehicles west of Hudson Bay and Lake of the Woods. Perhaps it was at his wife's suggestion that George Simpson showed off the prowess of his canoemen to the Red River settlers. What a sight—and sound—those unsurpassed voyageurs must have created as they swept down Red River to the strains of their paddling songs! As the expedition fell down river, the diarist's husband—a man who knew his own mind and made little of problems that delayed others—quickly and easily selected a site for the new fort, Lower Fort Garry.

En route to the Bay the voyageurs performed one of the gallantries for which they were famous. I believe one cannot find a more explicit account of the creation of a lob pine than this description by Frances Simpson. I should like to learn from anyone who can inform me, whether her "May Pole" still stands. If so, it is a true rarity and deserves recognition.

One of the last entries is a very tart "showing up" of a well known chief factor, Colin Robertson, which reveals more acid in the young wife's character than one would suspect from previous entries in the journal. These remarks are so much out of character that a reader has to wonder a bit. Could it be that her husband influenced her to write them? In a few other places in the diary there are entries that raise the same question in one's mind.

In the main, however, the diary discloses a pleasant, youthful personality, an observant eye, and a most cheerful willingness on the part of the writer to put up with her husband's studied haste and unreasonable voyaging habits. One cannot avoid the feeling that he was showing off for someone's benefit. Could it have been that he hoped her diary would be published, or at least, read by the "proper" persons? It certainly was not customary in well regulated brigades of canoes to push up small streams or to portage in the dark.

Only occasionally in all canoe-travel literature does one find a writer like Frances Simpson alive to the beauties and grandeur of the untouched continent through which voyaging parties travelled. The fluid highway of the voyageurs led through a wide territory of Canada and along the border of the United States, which is renowned today for its scenery. Men and women look forward all year to the few vacation weeks or days which they can spend enjoying its rocks and lakes, its rivers and inland seas, its pure air and freedom from strain. Of the two leaders of the 1830 party, Frances was much more modern than George Simpson in her attitude toward it. If she had left no other legacy to posterity than this charming, natural record of her appreciation of the North American forests, lakes, and rocky wilderness, we should be much in her debt. In addition, she has given us better insight into modes of travel in 1830, the hitherto unrecorded customs of canoe travel in that day, and the character of her famous husband.

Dr. Grace Lee Nute, author of The Voyageur, Caesars of the Wilderness, *and other books of the old fur trade, is an experienced canoe traveller, and can write with rare knowledge and understanding of Frances Simpson's journey.*

JUNE 2nd Yesterday having been a broken day, Mr. Simpson determined on making up for it, and he accordingly gave the call at 12 P.M. I was exceedingly sleepy, and being well wrapped up in Cloaks, soon settled myself into a comfortable nap, when in running a Rapid, a wave broke in upon the side of the Canoe on which I was, and gave me a benefit in the shape of a Cold Bath. We however put ashore soon afterwards to an early Breakfast, when my clothes were dried, and we then proceeded down this truly beautiful stream, the banks of which, are clothed with a variety of fine Timber, and laid out as regularly as if planted by the hands of man. Got to the Lake of the Woods at 2 O'clock, continued our route thro' it about 30 miles; when we put up for the night in an excellent encampment.

3rd Raised Camp this morning at 1 A.M. Made a small Portage in the Lake, at 6 O'clock, and another into river Winnipeg at 10. Descended that noble Stream, the scenery of which is finely diversified; comprehending all the varieties of Hill, Dale, Mountain & Rock: rich Meadows, Timber of all sizes, heavy Waterfalls, strong Rapids &c. and every few miles as we proceeded, the river expanding into Lakes, with their Islands, Inlets & Bays, in short, nothing can be more beautifully picturesque than the route of today.

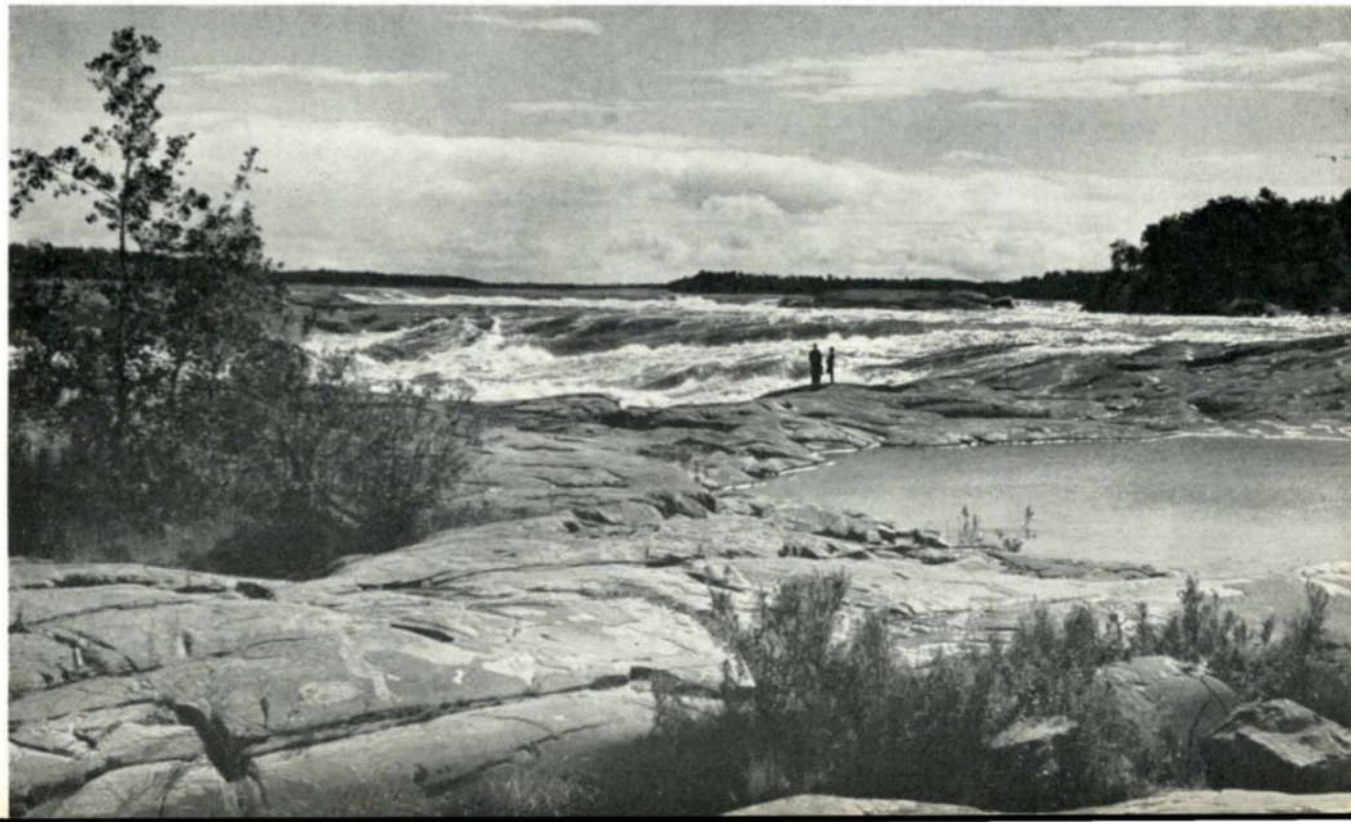
About noon, an Indian met us, with a packet of letters for Mr. Simpson, which brought favorable accounts from the Northern Establishments. In the evening, we had a great deal of very heavy rain, and put up at dark, in a very uncomfortable swampy Encampment; it being too late to look out for a better.

4th Embarked at ½ past 1 A.M. We had not proceeded far, when the heavy rapid of Portage de L'Isle, made itself known to us, by breaking over the sides of the Canoe and giving us a moistening.

Fort Alexander on the Winnipeg River in 1858. From H. Y. Hind's "Canadian Red River."

Made several Portages over smooth rocks of Granite, some of which, were troublesome, and dangerous to pass, owing to the rain of the former night, having made them very slippery. The principal were, "Chute de Jacob" (the torrent of which foams, & boils, with a thundering sound for a considerable distance) "Pointe de Bois," the "Barriere," "Chute des Esclaves," and "Grand Galet"—the last a beautiful Rock, of about one hundred & fifty yards in length; the breadth between the Water and the Woods by which it is flanked, varying from 20 to 30 yards, with a perfectly smooth & level surface. We encamped here, and I found it by far the most pleasant foundation for a bed, I had yet tried. The scene around this spot was very fine—the dashing Waters sparkling beneath the clear light of the Moon, together with the Tents, Fires &c. of the Encampment, forming a picture at once striking & romantic.

The upper part of Silver Falls on the Winnipeg River, until recently one of the great scenic beauties of the West, but which has now disappeared (almost without protest) to provide more electricity. The Simpson party portaged here over the flat rocks. R. Harrington



Frances Simpson, the author of this journal, from a portrait owned by Mrs. Louis Burke.

5th At the last Portage in this river (Winnipeg) the crews of both Canoes shaved, and dressed in their gayest attire, previous to landing at Fort Alexander, where we arrived at 1 A.M. [P.M.] and were welcomed with no ordinary degree of kindness by Chief Factor John Stuart, the Gentleman in charge of the Establishment. Dined here, and took our departure at Sun Set, encamping about a mile below the Establishment.

6th Mr. Simpson being anxious to get to Fort Garry (about 100 miles distant) today, gave his usual "Lève Lève Lève" at 12 P.M. and although it blew very hard, occasioning a heavy swell on Lake Winnipeg when we embarked, we got to the mouth of Red River at 11 A.M. The beauty of this Stream surpasses that of every other I have yet seen in the Interior. The banks are richly clothed with Timber of larger size, and greater variety than is generally met with, and the soil when properly cultivated as fertile as that of a manured garden.

This rich Country forms an immense sea of level plains, which extends upwards of 500 miles back, on the West side to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, on the South to the Missourie, and on the North to the Saskatchawin.

On advancing in the Settlement, signs of civilization began to appear in the form of houses built of Logs, and surrounded by patches of ground which bore the marks of the Plough & the Spade: from this point, cultivation is continued along the banks with very little intermission, as far as nine miles beyond the Fort, which is situated 50 miles from the mouth of the River. As the houses and farms increased in magnitude, & improved in quality, the pleasing & domestic sight of Cattle appeared, which added much to the beauty and interest of the Scene.

About 2 O'clock we came to an Indian Camp, the Chief of which was recognized as "Peguish" or the "Cut nosed Chief," who embarked in his Canoe, attended by six or seven of his followers, to congratulate Mr. Simpson on his return, he being very popular among the Indians, on account of treating them with uniform kindness: which in my humble opinion (except perhaps in extreme cases) is the surest way towards attaining the desired end of improving their condition; as it is far more likely to succeed in weaning them from their Savage life & roving habits, than authority harshly exercised could be—and they are thus frequently induced to give up the fatigue & uncertainty of the Chase, for the more peaceable and certain occupation of husbandry. The Chief welcomed me very cordially in his Native Tongue, to his "Native Land" —shook me by the hand several times, and promised to come to the Fort next day to pay me a visit.

On stopping to prepare for Dinner, Mr. Simpson gave all the Wine & Liquor that remained to the Men, who made it into Punch in their large cooking Kettle, and regaled thereon, till some of them were "powerfully refreshed." This debauch (the first I had seen on the voyage) infused into our Crew a degree of artificial strength & spirits, otherwise we should not have reached the Fort, as they were quite overpowered with sleep and fatigue; but after it began to operate, they paddled and sung, with much gaiety, bringing us to the Establishment at 12 P.M. after a hard day's work of 24 hours.

The first respectable looking house to be seen, belongs to Mr. Cocrane, [Rev. Wm. Cockran] one of the Clergymen of the Settlement, and is situated about 16 miles from the Fort: near it is his Church [St. Andrews], the sight of which, had the most cheering effect, after passing so many Wilds without the smallest trace of a Sacred Edifice, or even of a Civilized habitation, and seemed to raise the Soul to its Creator, who is to be found in the remotest corner of the Globe, and whose Fatherly care, and protection are equally divided, between the poor untutored Savage, and the Monarch who reigns over an enlightened people. This was the first place of Worship I had seen, since leaving Montreal, and I hailed it as a favorable sign of the moral state of the Colony.

Mr. Cocran was from home, but his Wife on seeing us approach, came from the house, and pressed us very kindly to land, which invitation we were obliged to decline, as it was then late in the Evening. A Courier was sent on horseback from the foot of the Rapids, to make known our arrival, and at midnight we landed at "Fort Garry."

The reception I here met with, convinced me that if the Inhabitants of this remote Region were plain & homely in their manners, they did not want for kindness of heart, and the desire of making every thing appear favorable, and pleasing, to the eye & mind of a Stranger.

7th The day after arrival was fully occupied in introductions to the different Settlers who came to pay their respects, and offer their congratulations to Mr. Simpson. Among the first was the Revd. Mr. Cocrane, one of the Mission for propagating Christian Knowledge. He is a very respectable good Man, plain, & frank in his manners, and apparently very anxious to succeed in the task he has undertaken: he keeps a School for the instruction of the Indian and Half-breed boys of the surrounding Country, and Mrs. Cocrane in like manner gives instruction to the Girls of the Settlement.

The Revd. Mr. [David] Jones (the Compys. principal Chaplain) is a very genteel, highly educated man, pleasing in his manners, and an admirable preacher. He appears to enter very zealously into the humane and laudable objects of reforming the loose & savage lives of the Indians, and of training their Offspring in the paths of Virtue, by instilling into their minds at an early age, the doctrines and precepts of the Christian Religion. Indeed, the whole Colony appears in a flourishing condition in every point of view, and will I have no doubt in the course of time, (when the civilized part of the population shall have increased) form a Settlement which will not only shed lustre on the memory of its Founder [Lord Selkirk], and hand down his name to posterity; but will influence others to follow so bright an example, and settle different portions of this vast Continent, the Interior of which, presents so fair a field to work upon.

There are two Protestant Churches, the lower one (situated near the house of Mr. Cocrane) being the larger on account of the greater number of Settlers residing in that quarter: the upper one [St. John's] next the Parsonage House is small, and attended by the Inhabitants of the Fort, who regularly observe the Sabbath with due & respectful deference. Opposite to Fort Garry, across the river, are the Church and House of the Catholic Bishop [Provencher], who is held in high veneration by the Canadian party here resident—he is a clever, sensible man, of majestic stature, fine open countenance, and an easy & pleasing address.

During our short stay here, I experienced the greatest kindness from the Inhabitants of Fort Garry, among whom were Messrs. [Duncan] Finlayson, [Donald] McKenzie, [Wm.] Todd, & [W. G.] Rae. Mr. McKenzie the Companys principal representative here, has been for many years stationed in the Interior of this vast Country, and is a very clever man, possessing a fund of amusing anecdotes and adventures, with which he entertained me not a little.

According to custom, Mr. Simpson gave a dinner before leaving the Colony, to all the respectable Settlers. The Bishop with his retinue of Priests was present, also Mr. Jones (the head of our Church) and his Wife, and Mr. Cocrane (his better half being unable to attend, owing to the illness of one of her Children). The whole party appeared very happy, and enjoyed the good cheer exceedingly. Mr. & Mrs. Jones remained until the following morning, when I accompanied the latter home, and in order that she might try the effect of light Canoe travelling (of which she had heard so much) Mr. Simpson ordered out his Men, who paddled us down in a very short time, singing all the favorite voyageur Airs, with much spirit and attracting all within reach of the sound.

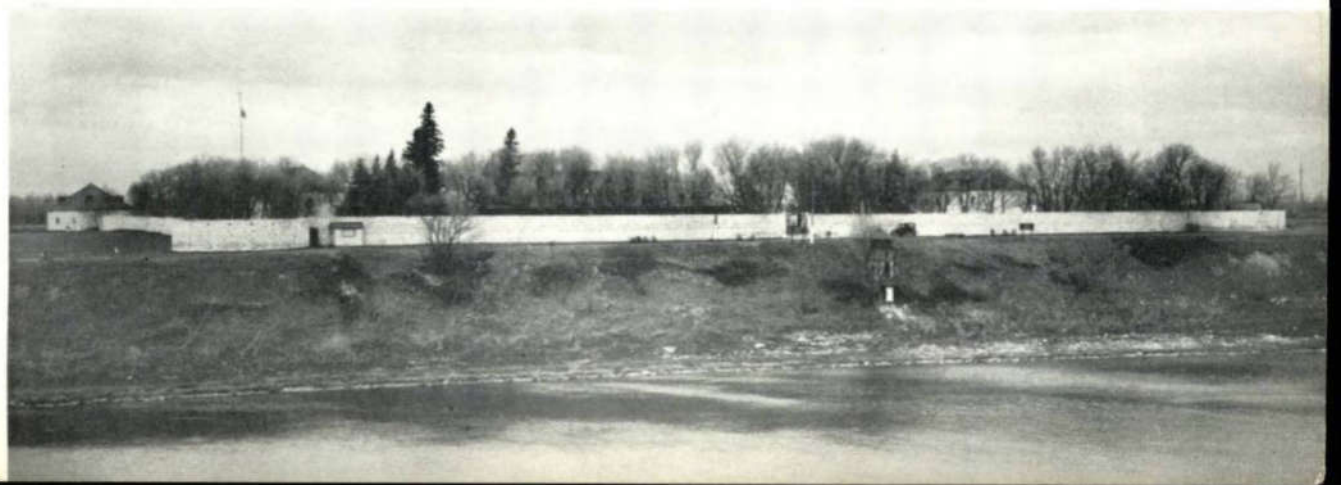
The Parsonage House is a neat pretty little Cottage built of Wood, (the only material used in the Country) and painted White—it has a small garden, railed round in a manner far superior to any of the rest, announcing it to be the best building (as far as appearances go) in the Settlement. Mrs. Jones was so well pleased with the mode of travelling, that I persuaded her to return to Dinner, & spend the Evening; as we were to start early the next morning for York Factory.

11th Left Fort Garry at ½ past 6 A.M. accompanied by another Canoe, in which were Messrs. McKenzie & Finlayson and arrived at 9 O'clock at Mr. Cocrane's, where we were met by Dr. Todd, & Mr. Rea, [Rae] who had travelled across the Plains on horseback. After breakfasting with Mrs. Cocrane, we proceeded to examine the ground for the site of a New Establishment, [Lower Fort Garry] about to be built at this end of the Settlement, and Mr. Simpson having selected a beautiful spot on a gentle elevation, surrounded by Wood, and commanding a fine view of the River, we took leave of Messrs. McKenzie & Cocrane, and continued our march.

The Sun scorching today, and the Water in Lake Winnipeg, as smooth & clear as a Mirror. Encamped between 8 & 9 O'clock half way between the Shoal Islands, and the Grassy Narrows.

12th Off at 2 A.M. passed three of the Red River Boats, which were in advance, & parted from Mr. Rea, who joined them in order to urge the men to a quicker march. . . .

Lower Fort Garry, the site for which was chosen by Governor Simpson on June 11, 1830, as described above.



Camp on the shore of Lake Winnipeg at night. From a water-colour by Peter Rindisbacher in the Public Archives of Canada.

On landing this evening we found the Musquitos very troublesome, and for the first time during the voyage, used our Musquito Curtains, which are made of a kind of thin Muslin or Gauze, and are fastened so as to enclose the bed, forming a Canopy above.

13th Embarked at 2 A.M. The Sun excessively warm during the morning: the scenery along the Lake still bearing the same barren, & dry aspect, the Country having been overrun by fire, which is the case in many parts of the Interior. . . . About 5 P.M. overtook Mr. John Stuart with his brigade of Boats: after chatting with him a few minutes, Mr. Simpson offered him a passage in our Consort Canoe, which was some distance behind with Mr. Finlayson & Dr. Todd; this, he at first accepted, but afterwards declined, not wishing that night to leave his people, but intending if possible to encamp with us, which however he could not accomplish. . . .

14th . . . Mr. Stuart joined us, before the Canoes were laden, having slept at a point a little distance from us: he now left his boats, and took his seat in our Canoe. The atmosphere was very hazy, and a small thick rain fell the greater part of the day, which was extremely warm. Between 5 & 6 P.M. a dense fog came on, so suddenly that the Steersman lost his way, and bent his course in a direction completely opposite to the one he ought to have taken —considerable time was thus lost; and a long discussion (amounting almost to a quarrel as to who were right & who wrong) between the crews of both crafts, took place— fortunately the Sun appeared for an instant, and convinced both parties that they had been in error. The Mist, after clearing for a short time, returned with all the darkness of night, entirely excluding any appearance of Land: as good luck would have it, the sharp eye of our Guide hit the mouth of the Jack River, of which we were in search, and that found, we continued our march with great rapidity, and arrived at Norway House at ½ past 10 P.M. We then found Mr. McLeod (in charge) Messrs. Christie & Lewis, (Chief Factors) Mr. Miles, & my Cousin Thomas [John McLeod, Alex Christie, John Lee Lewes, Robert S. Miles, Thos. Simpson.]

We remained at this Post till the 22nd Inst. during which time, there were arrivals of Gentlemen with their Brigades from all parts of the Country, who were afterwards to proceed to York Factory, the grand Depot of the business. The largest Brigade was that of Mr. [John] Rowand from the Saskatchawin, (one of the most attached friends Mr. Simpson has in the Country) which consisted of 21 large Boats, deeply laden with Furs, & other valuables. He is a remarkably lively good tempered Man, with a Countenance which bespeaks drollery, and good humour—he was accompanied by Mr. [Wm.] McIntosh, & Dr. Hamlin, [Richard Hamlyn] Messrs. [J. E.] Harriott, [Richard] Grant, [Jas.] McDougal, & Linton.

Mr. [John] Clark[e] next made his appearance from Swan River. He is a very different man from the one described above: pompous in his manner, seems to study every word he utters, and in short affects the fine Gentleman; apparently considering himself far superior in refinement of taste & manners to his neighbours. He had a very fine new Boat, of light and pretty construction, which he ventured to propose as a match for our light Canoe; and so confident was he in her swiftness, that he laid a bet with Mr. Simpson, that in a race, she would win the Palm: the challenge was accepted, the bet was a large keg of Liquor for the Crew: 8 men were placed in each craft, and they started amid the cheers of the Spectators. Tomma Felix exerted all his science in singing "La Belle Rosier," and the poor Boat was soon left far behind; in

Canoe approaching Norway House. From R. M. Ballantyne's "Hudson's Bay."

returning she was in a still worse plight, for the Canoe was out of the Water, drawn upon the bank, and the Men very composedly watching the arrival of their opponent, before she had reached one half the distance assigned her. Mr. Clark was evidently chagrined at his loss, and avoided speaking of Boat races afterwards.

The situation of Norway House is pleasant, being on an elevated bank, dry and affording a fine shelter for the Craft and excellent Encampments for the people. . . . The business of this place being now transacted all were again in motion on their way to York Factory, there to await the arrival of the annual Ships from England. We started at 1 A.M. the 22nd Inst. . . . we encamped amongst myriads of Musquitos which were not idle with their stings, and were so numerous inside, as well as outside the Tent, that we were under the necessity of smoking them out by placing smouldering logs within the Tent, and fastening it on all sides, till our tormentors dropped down dead by the Thousand.

25th . . . the Voyageurs agreed among themselves to cut a "May Pole," or "Lopped Stock" for me; which is a tall Pine Tree, lopped of all its branches excepting those at the top, which are cut in a round bunch: it is then barked: and mine (being a memorable one) was honored with a red feather, and streamers of purple ribband tied to a poll, and fastened to the top of the Tree, so as to be seen above every other object: the surrounding trees were then cut down, in order to leave it open to the Lake. Bernard (the Guide) then presented me with a Gun, the contents of which I discharged against the Tree, and Mr. Miles engraved my name, and the date, on the trunk, so that my "Lopped Stick" will be conspicuous as long as it stands, among the number of those to be seen along the banks of different Lakes and Rivers.

26th . . . Travelled today with great rapidity; the people being told they must reach York Factory before they slept. They accordingly lost no time, and by applying frequently to the Liquor Keg, contrived to keep up both their strength & spirits.

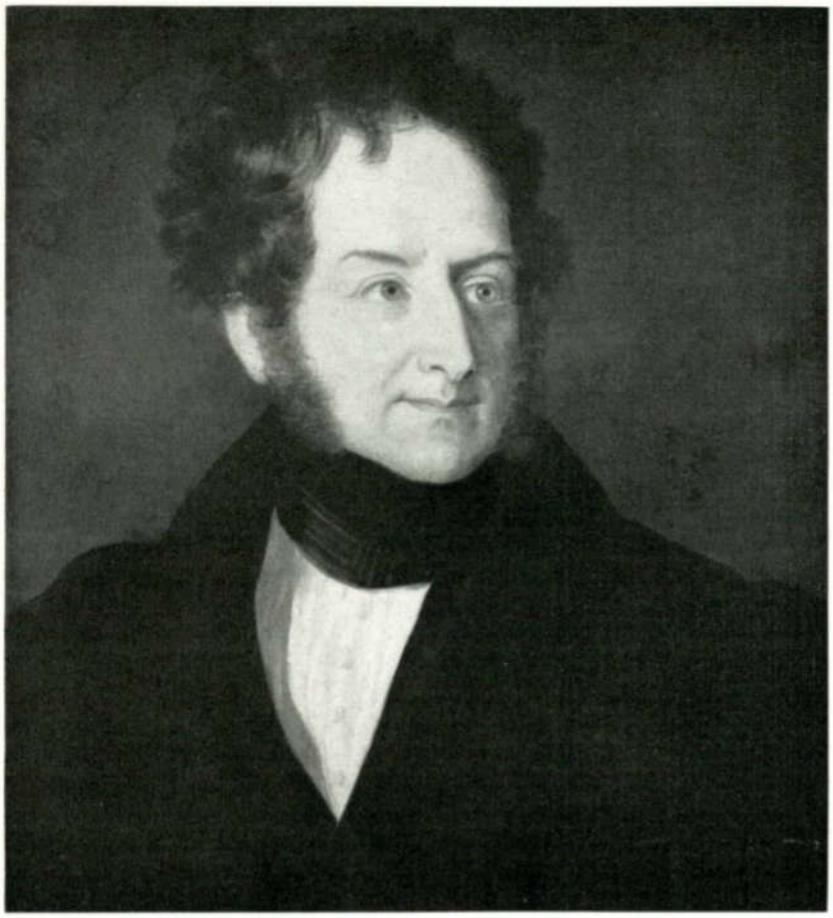
We arrived at the Factory at Midnight, and retired immediately to rest, Mr. Simpson having ordered that none of the Gentlemen should be disturbed.

Fond as I am of travelling, I own, I felt pleased at the idea of remaining quiet for two months: having traversed in various ways (since the 8th of March) a distance of 8000 Miles, which for a Novice, is no small undertaking.

I must here observe, that a Canoe voyage is not one which an English Lady would take for pleasure; and though I have gone through it very well, there are many little inconveniences to be met with, not altogether pleasing or congenial to the taste of a Stranger: viz. rising between 1 & 2 A.M. sleeping sometimes on swampy ground, sometimes on hard rocks, and at others on sand, (the worst of all materials for a couch) with no other bedding than a couple of Blankets & Cloaks:—living the greater part of the time on salted provisions without vegetables:—exposed to a scorching sun, cold winds, and heavy rain—putting up late some evenings drenched to the skin, and finding the Encampment so wet, as to render it impossible to dry any of our wet clothes, when it became necessary to wear them the following day in the same state.

Many of these difficulties may be in some measure overcome, by persons accustomed to travel thro' the Country in this manner, so that I possessed the greatest advantage, as Mr. Simpson from frequent experience, knew how to appreciate every comfort that could be obtained, and kindly provided me with many things he had never before thought of—viz. Indian Rubber Shoes, Umbrellas, a thin Oil Cloth as a covering from the rain &c. &c.

Since my arrival here, I have experienced the greatest kindness from all the Gentlemen: who (tho' perhaps not exactly calculated to shine in polished Society,) are warm-hearted, kindly dispositioned people; who offer to a



Chief Factor Colin Robertson "who considers himself the Chesterfield of Rupert's Land." From a painting probably done by Gilbert Stuart Newton in 1821, and now owned by Miss Frances Harman, through whose kindness it is here reproduced.

stranger, the most cordial, and unaffected welcome, and endeavour to make every thing pleasing & agreeable.

There is one character however, I cannot resist showing up in particular: this is no less a personage than Chief Factor Colin Robertson, who considers himself the Chesterfield of Rupert's Land, and therefore surpassing all others in elegant manners, and polite conversation.

During the time he remained here, he took a wonderful fancy for beauing me round the Fort, when he never failed expressing his regret (in exceedingly bad English) that the rest of the gentlemen were so little adapted for Ladies' society; and apologized for their awkward manners, and appearance, eyeing himself at the same time, as much as to say, "They are very different men from me."

He always took care to broach subjects in which the names of great, or learned men were to be introduced, with whom he was sure to be in habits of close friendship, for instance, in talking of the "Sketch Book," he took occasion to let me know that the author Washington Irving was his most intimate friend; the exquisite poetry of "Lalla Rookh" (which I discovered he had never read) as being by Moore, whom he talked of as a brother:—the great treasure Covent Garden Theatre found in the talents of his "old Chum" Kemble:— and the irreparable loss England had sustained by the death of his much-valued, and lamented friend Canning. In short he talked of every one of any celebrity, whose names he was acquainted with, as his particular friends, although he frequently blundered even the names; as Peter, instead of Thomas Moore, and Tom, instead of Charles Kemble. He thus by affecting the polished, fine & polite gentleman rendered himself quite ridiculous, and a perfect annoyance, and I was heartily glad when he took his departure for his Wintering quarters. . . .

25th The foregoing remarks have brought me up to the 14th Inst. when I was made happy by the recit of letters from England, by the "Prince Rupert," Captn. [Benjamin] Bell, and the "Montcalm," Captn. [Robt.] Royal; which sailed from Stromness the 1st of July.

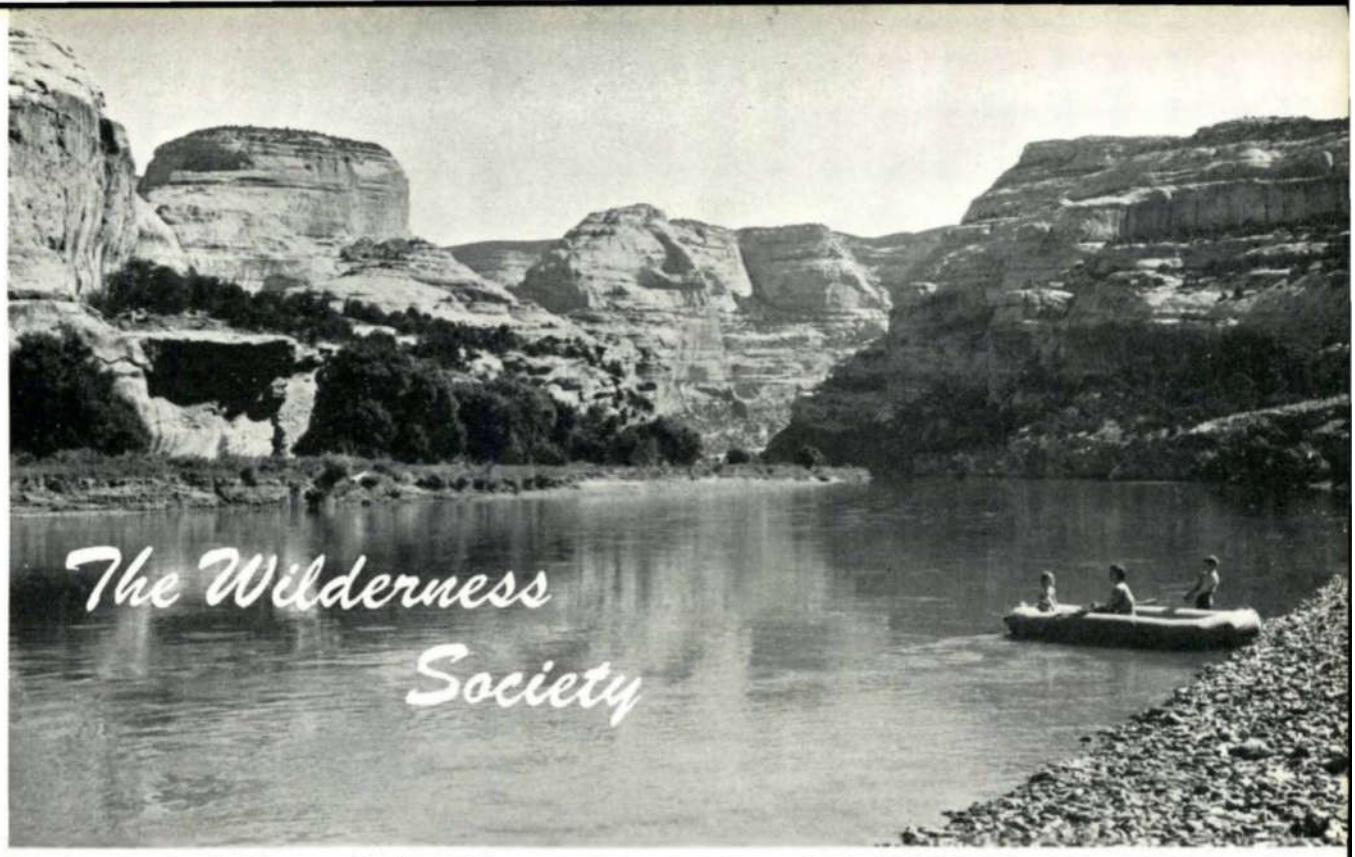
The anxiety evinced by every one for the arrival of these Ships, can be more easily conceived than described:—every ear was attentively listening for the report of the Signal Gun, which is usually fired when the Ships approach the Coast; and every eye was eagerly watching for the sight of an object along the edge of the Horizon. At length, the long wished for Packet was brought ashore, and in a few minutes all were busily engaged perusing the communications of those dear friends of whose welfare they had so long been anxiously wishing to hear.

Since that time, I have been busily engaged answering the numerous kind letters I have received, and preparing for my departure from this place, which we purpose leaving the 27th Inst. and expect to arrive at Red River from the 18th to the 20th Proxo. before the bad Weather sets in.

We shall now voyage by Boat, instead of Canoe, being the more commodious, and comfortable mode of travelling for this season: and having nothing further worthy of remark to introduce here, I shall lay aside my pen: trusting that such of my friends as may take the trouble of perusing the foregoing unconnected Memoranda, will examine them with an indulgent eye; and as they must know that this is my first essay at committing my ideas, or the result of my observations to paper, except in the form of a familiar note, or letter, I feel assured they will excuse the style, and small degree of merit they possess—it is my intention however, to continue this narrative (if it deserves that name) during my residence in the Arctic Regions, and hope as it progresses, that it will acquire a greater degree of interest.

Frs. R. Simpson

York Factory—August 25th 1830.



The Wilderness Society

This picture taken in Dinosaur National Monument was ready to be run in the Fall 1953 issue of the society's quarterly, "The Living Wilderness," when the news about the possibility of flooding the area came through. It was taken out and a handwritten appeal to the members of the society for immediate action was printed in its place.

To preserve the beauty and tranquillity of certain wild areas is the aim of this energetic society.

by Olaus J. Murie

TO understand the present day movement to preserve for posterity some original wilderness, it may be profitable to hark back to earlier days, when there was plenty of it. My own first venture into the "far places" in any important degree was in 1914, when, recently out of college, I had an opportunity to go to Hudson Bay, where I eventually spent eighteen months. It opened up a wonderland of adventure about which we used to read in novels. Many of us had been inspired by Stewart Edward White's books *The Silent Places* and *Conjuror's House*. We used to look at the "white places" on the maps, and read with envy about the exploits of those who were fortunate enough to explore them.

In 1917 a party of us crossed interior Labrador—one of those "white places"—three of us representing Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh, under the leadership of the ornithologist, Mr. W. E. Clyde Todd, and five Indians. Being the youngest of the scientific party, I served as the sixth "Indian" in the bow of one of the three canoes. My education in canoe lore, teamed up with the experienced man in the stern, was priceless. Many a time my errors in the swift water, sharply corrected in the emergency by my Ojibway companion, brought home to me vividly some of the important technique for avoiding disaster, whether with paddle or with pole.

We left Seven Islands, Quebec, late in May, worked our way laboriously up the St. Margaret River as far as Lake Carré, then from that section of the St. Margaret River system we went across, by lakes and ponds and streams and portages, to the Moisie River waters and continued to its headwaters. From that point we portaged over the height of land, crossed such lakes as Shebogama, Oposkoshkass, Menikek, and Petitsikapau, into Swampy Bay River. More lakes, then the Kaniapiskau River, into the Koksoak River, and finally down to Fort Chimo late in August.

When we were told that this was the first complete crossing of the Labrador Peninsula I really felt that I had taken part in one of those explorations that I had read and dreamed about. Not the least of my satisfactions was the privilege of sharing for a time with the people of this far away trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company in Ungava Bay, the sense of isolation from the crowded settled part of the world. This remoteness was enhanced by the coming of the S.S. *Nascopie*, the steamer that came but once a year from Montreal and London, and on which we returned to Montreal in September.

We took wilderness for granted in those days. Wilderness was there, for any who wished to experience it. I don't know just when the value of wilderness as a cultural influence was first expressed, but there are Biblical references

Dr. Murie is president and director of the Wilderness Society. Considered "the United States' foremost exponent of wilderness values," he is also a well known biologist and naturalist, who has written and illustrated a great many articles for popular and scientific publications.

Ten thousand acres of forest land here were saved from lumbering operations in Glacier National Park. Beyond the forest is the Livingston Range. John Willard.

to it. And of course in the earlier periods of settlement of the American continent there were those far sighted ones who began to warn us about what was happening to our human environment.

It is logical that the danger of a loss would first become apparent in the United States, where we so quickly swarmed over the original landscape, began to exploit the natural resources, built cities, cultivated huge areas of land, and generally proceeded to tame the country with delighted enthusiasm. But we did manage to establish a national forest system. Our national park system was begun in 1872. Much later, in the 1930s, the U.S. Forest Service, foreseeing future need, established a system of wild, primitive, and wilderness areas, in various classifications, which were to remain entirely roadless. All these steps were, of course, the result of inspired foresight by thoughtful leadership.

It was only natural that, after a long period of exuberant frontier exploitation, many people would fail to see the importance of wild country. Hence, it would become necessary to *defend* the principle, to defend it against ourselves. And so the Wilderness Society was born. It happened in 1935, when a group of hikers in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, reflecting on their own experiences there, and on the possibility that they could never be shared by other people in the future, determined then and there to organize for the protection of wilderness. The late Robert Marshall was the prime mover. In that group also were Harvey Broome, the present vice-president of the Wilderness Society, and Bernard Frank, a member of the council.

From this small beginning the society grew, until today we have some thousands of members, from practically every state in the Union, from Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and a number of other countries, including New Zealand.

And were the founders' fears realized? Indeed, we became involved in defence from the very beginning. On one occasion which I recall vividly, we had to rush to the defense of a western mountain, already dedicated as a wilderness, to protect it from commercial skiing developments. In that instance we were contending with friends, for we heartily endorse skiing as a wholesome element in our lives. But the skiers themselves were divided. Cross country skiers objected to the invasion of beautiful untouched wild country, already dedicated as such, by roads and commercial establishments. As a result of the public hearing, we still have that mountain top intact.

A few years ago there were plans for flooding a considerable acreage in Glacier National Park. We were in correspondence over this with various organizations, obtained all possible information on the case, and went to the public hearing. There, we discovered, people from diverse activities had assembled to defend their national park. One strong defender was the Montana State Grange. Testimony was about three to one in favour of keeping the park intact.

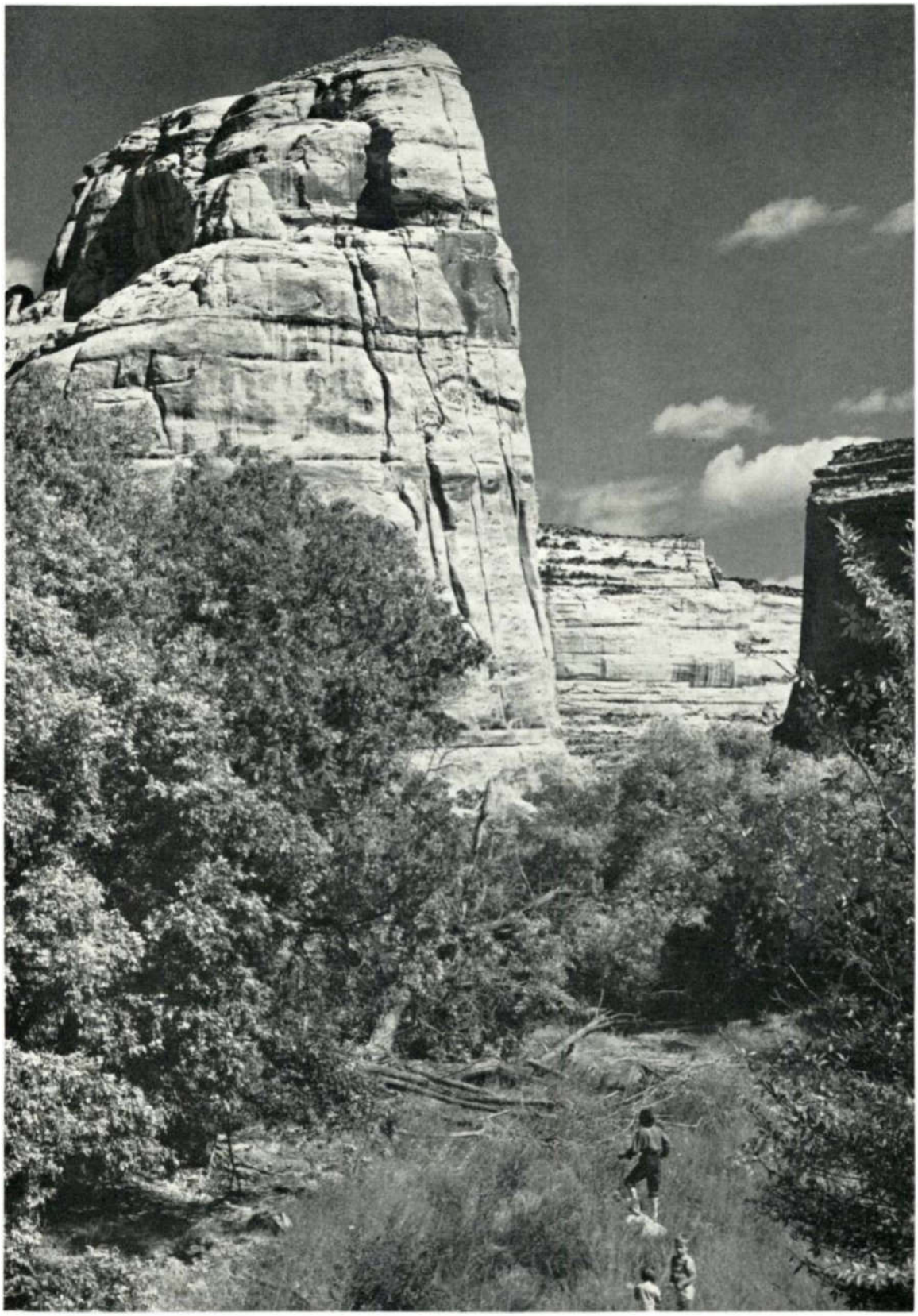
Another crisis was the proposal to invade the Robert Marshall Wilderness Area in Montana with a dam. Again people rose in defence.

Currently we have on our hands the defence of the so-called Dinosaur National Monument, partly in Utah and Colorado. The principal feature of this area consists of the spectacular canyons, a scenic area akin to the canyon of the Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon itself. The proposal is to build two high dams that would flood the heart of the entire area, and drown the canyons. The outcome is uncertain, but it has become a national issue. The conservationists of our country have recommended a number of alternative sites, and do not oppose the storage of water. We are simply urging coordination in public planning, with due regard for the interests involved in an area already designated for a worthy public use.*

Another issue is the incomparable Olympic National Park on the west coast of Washington. Certain lumber interests wish to have a large acreage of this national park for commercial use. Again the conservationists of the country are rallying to save a piece of wilderness.

A number of other problems are looming on the horizon. But we are no longer fighting alone. In all these efforts we

*Articles on the possible flooding of this scenic area have been published in the *National Geographic* for March 1954, *Natural History* for May 1954, and *The Living Wilderness* for Fall 1953 and Winter 1953-4.



Steamboat Rock, 700-foot high landmark in Dinosaur National Monument will disappear almost entirely if present plans for flooding the canyons are carried out. Martin Litton.

now have with us, shoulder to shoulder, other conservation organizations, organized for other more or less particular interests, but who realize that the wilderness environment is basic to so many of these interests. Among the many who have come to the rescue of our unspoiled landscape are the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, the Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League, National Audubon Society, American Nature Association, Wildlife Federation, and Wildlife Management Institute. The National Parks Association was organized before the Wilderness Society, and we have close working relationship, sharing the same office building in Washington. The CIO labour organization has a conservation committee that works closely with us on these mutual problems. The Federation of Women's Clubs and Garden Clubs of America have thrown their strength into our effort to save the country's places of beauty. They joined in our current struggle to save the outstanding canyons of the Green and Yampa Rivers in Dinosaur National Monument, which issue still hangs in the balance.

More recently the Nature Conservancy was organized, devoted to preserving samples of the many vegetation types of the country. And there are many other local and regional groups, each working in its own way toward a common goal.

Last year the U.S. Forest Service held a hearing concerned with the possible reduction of boundaries of the Gila Wilderness Area in New Mexico. There were certain administrative problems, and the embarrassment of having jeep trails already established on certain parts of the area. In this case many local organizations, including veterans' groups, arose in protest against any reduction of the wilderness area. Here was an instance in which the initiative for defence of the area was entirely taken out of the hands of the Wilderness Society. We like to believe that it signifies an advance in general appreciation of wild country.

But it is not all defence of specific areas. We believe that it is necessary to constantly examine our concepts, to try to understand this phenomenon of the people of the world banding together to save wilderness. So we publish a quarterly magazine, the *Living Wilderness*, where we share our thoughts and aspirations with each other, where people tell of their experiences, in prose and poetry and pictures, where members may be informed of current events in the conservation field, and where generally we deal with the wilderness preservation program. We are a member of the International Union for the Protection of Nature and at their biennial assemblies we have opportunity to exchange ideas with representatives of many other nations, all devoted to the preservation of wildlife and wild country throughout the world.

How does it happen that we are so eager to save wild country? It is hard to analyze by formulae the motivations of the human race. It is like trying to explain the impulse for goodness, our spontaneous reaching for art—be it literature, painting or music. To be sure, at public hearings we are forced to try to put into argument in literal form these concepts we try to defend. On one occasion, when we assembled to defend a beautiful lake in the mountains of Wyoming, we were challenged by the engineers to give them a concrete formula by which to *measure* the human value of the lake. They were using the dollar standard. We insisted that they should study it from the standpoint of the needs of people, aside from any dollar formula, just as we estimate the need for schools, churches, museums.

I spoke of the white spaces on the map. They are gone now. Railroads are penetrating Labrador. We have swarmed all around the remaining wild country here in the United States. Airplanes are flying everywhere. The map is all coloured now, and we are gazing into interstellar space. So why should we worry any more about Wilderness?

True, there are few places left to explore in the old sense. But we now have opportunity to savour the wilderness environment, each one personally; to feel the satisfaction of achievement in travel by one's own effort; to be in contact, for a time, with the original environment in which the human race was nurtured, and in which its aspirations originated.

In 1946 our family undertook a trip in the so-called Quetico-Superior country of northern Ontario and northern Minnesota. With two canoes, the five of us travelled for two weeks in that incomparable wild country of lakes. We followed the maps, hunted for portages, carried our canoes and outfit from one lake to another. We met other parties there, family groups, boy scouts, Y.M.C.A. groups, fishermen, people of small financial means, others well financed—but everyone travelling on the same level of personal effort. And we all liked it that way.

We crossed over into Quetico Provincial Park, and it gave us a particularly uplifting and neighbourly feeling not to know exactly where the international boundary was. The friendly Canadian customs officer with whom we had cleared on one of the lakes was obviously a woodsman himself, so appropriate there. And a young Canadian we met on one of the portages (who insisted on carrying across our 17-foot canvas canoe), spoke eloquently about his love of this canoe wilderness. I looked longingly northward, wanting to go on and on.

We found the Canadian side tranquil and peaceful, and apparently as yet unspoiled by commercial establishments. But on the Minnesota side industrial life has crowded closer to the boundaries and we have had great difficulty. We are still struggling to keep intact this wild canoe country, what there is left of it. But we are hopeful. This is a national treasure, of great public value, and I have faith that eventually our people will be able to keep it.

Those of us who struggle to keep a wilderness system must understand that our opposition arises from a perfectly natural circumstance. We are still under the influence of the pioneer urge to occupy a new continent, when the problem was to *push back* the wilderness, and to fill the country with people. We need time in which to realize that that particular job has been done. Our job now is not to repeat the mistakes of the older settled countries of Europe. Even so, England is now establishing national parks. It has been our experience that enthusiasm for

saving wilderness is most intense in those areas where wilderness is gone. It is least in some of our sparsely settled western states. Again, we take wilderness for granted until it is too late.

A few years ago I had the great privilege of being a guest of the New Zealand government, in a sense, to investigate some wildlife situations in their incomparable Fiordland country. I became associated with those sturdy conservationists, became somewhat familiar with their problems, and we had many interesting discussions. After my return to the United States, on the request of New Zealand conservationists, I wrote my impressions of their country and its possibilities for wilderness preservation, and we devoted space to it in our magazine, which was made available to them for their own use. So we feel a special bond of fellowship with those people around the curve of the globe, who so deeply love their native bush and their native birds.

I was accompanied by members of my family, and we spent some time in the principal cities where we were impressed with the fact that at the border of Wellington, the capital city, the people had preserved the Wilton Bush, a native forest penetrated only by trails. With a friend, now a member of the Wilderness Society, we examined a similar tract of primitive woodland in the city of Christchurch. With other friends we visited the Waipoua Forest, with its great kauri pines. I understand that they have now established a large portion of that forest as a kauri pine reserve.

We came back from New Zealand refreshed, and encouraged, knowing that other countries are striving to build a good environment, just as we are trying to do in the United States.

Another happy situation is being close to the work of our Canadian neighbours. Many of us are familiar with the Canadian Rockies, and the many landscapes of beauty throughout Canada. I have enjoyed the tundra of the Old Crow River in Yukon Territory, a special experience to be cherished. We believe we understand the work Canadians are doing. It is similar to ours.

We find it hard to put into words what we believe about wilderness, but we of the Wilderness Society firmly believe that the wilderness contributed something of value to the culture of the frontier, and that it will continue to give strength to our modern culture if we only have the wisdom to save some of it. ◆

A typical view of the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota.

Men...

Meet the Phalarope

by Eric Nicol

Sketches by Jim Simpkins

WE blokes, casting about for some other species where the male gets pushed around as much as we do, may take dubious comfort in a small northern bird called the phalarope. Taverner, in his *Birds of Canada*, describes the phalarope thus:

"The female instead of the male is the bright-coloured member of the family circle, and she takes the initiative in courting rites; makes the first advance towards her shy and modestly coloured prospective mate; and upon fulfilling her duties of egg deposition, leaves the cares of incubation and family-raising largely to him."

Except for depositing eggs, that is about as accurate a picture of the Little Woman as you could hope to find. The phalarope has discovered the secret of gracious living; that is, the female wears the bright colours and the old man gets sucked into the cares of incubation.

I, for one, would be interested to learn how the male phalarope let this ugly state of affairs creep up on him. We all know how we human chumps lost possession of the ball—the emancipation of women, the Roaring Twenties, the Great American Pedestal, and so on. But I don't remember hearing about any phalaropes having gin parties or giving their women the vote. In fact these small water birds probably had a full-fledged matriarchy, with glum modestly-coloured males, way back when man was still happily clubbing his dates and incubating nothing but plans for an evening's fun.

This is a sobering thought and I wish it hadn't occurred to me. Nor am I reassured by Taverner's lyrical account of the phalarope's social life:

"One of the commonest as well as one of the loveliest of the inhabitants of the prairie sloughs, it loves the little sunny mud-bottomed pools of shallow water in the meadow. While the males, in grass-shaded nests, are performing the duties of incubation, the females, in little friendly parties, disport themselves with exquisite grace on nearby open water. They swim about like blown thistledown, their white bodies riding high, breaking up the smooth surface into innumerable interlacing lines of silvery ripples. They pause here and there and whirl about in little circles as the black water-beetles do, stirring up the mud with their delicate little feet and bringing to the surface a harvest of tid-bits which they seize with quick passes of their rapier-like bill. Anon they disperse to repeat the pretty performance a little farther on."

"The females, in little friendly parties, disport themselves on open water."

Eric Nicol is a bachelor, who writes a column—sometimes serious, chiefly humorous—for the Vancouver Daily Province *and the* Winnipeg Tribune. *He is the author of three books:* Sense and Nonsense, The Roving I, *and* Twice Over Lightly—*the latter also illustrated by Jim Simpkins.*

"She takes the initiative in courting rites."

There we have it—the wives at the bridge club. Except that they stir up the mud with their delicate little tongues rather than their delicate little feet, this could be the picture of Mrs. Suburbia and the girls at play.

And where, in this pretty picture, is father? He is sitting in the nest, still performing the duties of incubation. No tid-bits for him. He is probably looking straight at a note saying, "Am over at Ethel's, dear. Tin of beans in cupboard."

Instead of sharing Taverner's delight in this spectacle, I want to know why it is that the males of some species sit around brooding, while others are out whirling about in little circles with the boys and leaving the dirty work to the missus. We, the phalarope, and male spiders have all blundered somewhere along the line. Is this evolution or is it just bad management?

Apparently the male phalarope has resigned himself to being stuck with the clutch; but this is no reason for us human males to do likewise. One of our strongest arguments for getting out and stirring up a little mud has been that woman's place is in the home. Now the phalarope comes along and louses up our line by proving that nature is not necessarily a man's world. We cant' have this.

I therefore suggest that, lovely and graceful though the phalarope may be, a price should be put on its pretty little head, say a buck per beak. Any bird that sabotages man's scrabbling effort to retain dominance over woman is ripe for extinction. We are crazy to be shooting at ducks (male-dominant), while this treacherous inhabitant of prairie sloughs is giving us the ornithological finger.

Naturally, it wouldn't be politic to broadcast the real reason for peppering the phalarope. Here Taverner—for the first time, I might say—suggests an excuse:

"A flock of phalaropes so feeding forms the brightest, most graceful scene imaginable. It is calumny to call their low monosyllabic voice a 'grunt,' yet it is the origin of one of their local names."

The phalarope's voice may appeal to Taverner, but to the rest of us, incubator-conscious, the grunter is an offence to the ear. The prairies have enough trouble, what with hail and bad roads and peculiar politics, without being saddled with a bird that grunts.

The grunter must go, gentlemen. It is to our cardinal interest that it should be preserved in buckshot, and quick. And once the phalarope is out of the way we can start working on spiders. Only thus shall we be out there on the open water, disporting ourselves as the water-beetles do. ◆

"The grunter must go, gentlemen."

EDWARD "BEAR" ELLICE

A leader of the North West Company's forces during its struggle for life, this astute fur-trader-politician became a wise counsellor to both the British Government and the Hudson's Bay Company.

by John S. Galbraith

EIGHTY-SIX years ago, George Brown, the editor of the *Toronto Globe* and the leading advocate of Canadian acquisition of Rupert's Land without compensation to the Hudson's Bay Company, vented his indignation at the resistance of the monopoly to his plans for its demise, by printing a smashing editorial. The Canadian hopes of annexation, he declared, had been frustrated by a conspiracy between the Company and certain unnamed British politicians. Brown's description of this relationship was as follows:

"The Hudson's Bay Company has always been a favourite with a good number of the English aristocracy, especially with the Whigs . . . But for the backstairs influence of Whig magnates, like the late Mr. Ellice, the great monopoly would not have been so tenacious of life; and but for some such underhand dealing and family pecuniary influences involved, the difficulties of arranging the manner in which the country [Rupert's Land] is to become part of our Confederation would not have been so great as they are apparently coming to be."

Brown, like many other crusaders, was not cursed with historical impartiality or reverence for fact; but his reference, five years after the death of Edward "Bear" Ellice, to the influence of Ellice on politics is an impressive tribute. Although Brown probably overestimated the power of Edward Ellice, he was correct in his description of Ellice as the liaison between the Company and the Government. Ellice, except for a brief period in office, was not a dominant politician, but his acquaintance with those who made policy was wide and often intimate. Whig politicians sought his advice on strategy and policy, and he was heard with respect by British statesmen, whether they were Whigs, Liberals, or Tories.

Ellice has suffered a strange fate at the hands of historians. He has been consigned by British political historians to oblivion; his name is remembered only by students of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, who usually attribute to him the engineering of the coalition between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. No biographer has yet chosen him as a subject. Yet Ellice's contributions to British political history were at least as great as those of many more publicized figures; while his role in the arrangement of the amalgamation of 1821 has been exaggerated. For this underestimation in one area and overstatement in another, Ellice himself is largely responsible. The contributions he made to politics were those of a manager and an adviser, and as a conciliator of opposing factions. In all of these capacities he was withdrawn from public view. But his contribution to the coalition he proudly and somewhat erroneously emphasized. Late in life, before the Select Committee of Parliament appointed in 1857 to investigate the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company, he testified that he was the author of the amalgamation. This conception was the honest recollection of an old man.

Ellice did not arrange the coalition. The agreement was a product of a recognition by all parties concerned that their interests could be served by peace rather than ruinous competition. But his services to the Company after 1821 were of great value.

Contemporary judgments of Ellice varied widely. Even in the appellation of "Bear" by which he was generally known, there was basis for disagreement. Thomas Carlyle declared that "a certain oiliness" rather than any evident ferocity gave Ellice his nickname. But the generally accepted and probably more reliable explanation was Ellice's popular association with the fur trade rather than any physical or mental characteristics. Ellice was affable rather than formidable, although he possessed commanding stature and impressive presence.

A careful survey of the records has revealed that he was born on September 27, 1783, the second of twelve children of Alexander and Anne Ellice. Alexander's fortune had been made in the American fur trade. Toward the end of the Seven Years War, when Scotland was beset by economic depression, he decided, as did thousands of Scots before and after him, that his future would be brighter in America. He migrated to New York with his younger brothers Robert and John.

When the Ellices arrived, British forces were already in control of New France, and New York fur traders who had previously been confined to a restricted area of operation, had already begun their expansion into the domains previously held by the French. The Ellice brothers had no resources beyond a few pounds provided them by their father, but they saw an opportunity for fortune in the fur trade of upper New York and the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes system. They established their headquarters in Schenectady as members of the firm of Phyn, Ellice and Company, and their fortunes prospered.

Dr. Galbraith, professor of British Empire history at the University of California in Los Angeles, has written several articles on the H B C in the 19th century, including one on the Puget Sound Co. for the Beaver. *He is presently at work on a book, "The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Power."*

Edward Ellice, senior. From a portrait presented to the Company by Russell Ellice, Esq.

The outbreak of the American Revolution produced a crisis for the Ellices. They possessed interests in both Canada and the United States, and association with either the Loyalists or the Patriots was likely to be damaging to their interest in one of these areas. Their problem was solved by an agreement by which the youngest brother, James, who had arrived in the United States in 1768, should remain in New York to protect the family's property from confiscation, while Robert and Alexander went to Canada, transferring the family's fur-trade interests to Montreal and then to London. Alexander thereafter maintained his interests in Canada, but he concentrated his attention on the development of the London headquarters of the company now known as Phyn, Ellices and Inglis, which became the supply house for the North West Company. When Alexander died in 1805, he left an estate which was valued at £430,000.

Even before the death of his father, Edward had assumed active charge of the affairs of Phyn, Ellices and Inglis, (after 1805, Inglis, Ellice & Co.) and thus was involved in the business of the North West Company. In the conflict between the Nor'Westers and the Hudson's Bay Company, his influence was largely beneath the surface, as it continued to be throughout his life, but enough of it is evident to indicate that he was a leader of the North West forces. He and his associates first attempted to end the struggle by purchasing a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company. When this plan was frustrated in 1811 by the Earl of Selkirk, Ellice, in the words of W. S. Wallace, "played a not unimportant part in the conflict which followed." He was the anonymous author of the *Communications of Mercator*, published in Montreal in 1817, which was a defence of the North West Company's claim.

Despite Ellice's business acumen, his fortune declined between 1812 and 1822. This deterioration was only partly caused by the losses of the North West Company. A more important factor was the general economic difficulty experienced by British merchants in the last years of the Napoleonic Wars and in the depression which followed. For ten years he faced ruin, and at the time of the negotiations between the Hudson's Bay and North West Company delegates, his prospects for recovery were not bright. But the coalition of 1821 was coincident with an upturn in his fortunes and by January, 1822, his friend and brother-in-law, Earl Grey, was able to express his "sincere joy at your having been able to extricate yourself from the difficulty which threatened you." In 1826, he calculated his assets as being worth £326,897, and despite a long series of vexatious law suits arising from the claims of creditors of the North West Company, he was never again in serious financial difficulties.

Ellice's rise in politics was made easier by a fortunate marriage in 1809 to Lady Hanna Althea Bettesworth, widow of a captain in the Royal Navy and the youngest sister of the second Earl Grey. In 1818, he was elected member of Parliament for Coventry, a position he held throughout his life with the exception of the period from 1826 to 1830. But he was no ordinary M.P. Through his marriage, Ellice joined the little family circle which was dominant in the Whig party until Earl Grey's retirement from office. Durham, who was Grey's son-in-law; Howick, Grey's son and later the third Earl Grey; and Ellice, were a liberalizing influence upon the Whig leader, and Durham and Ellice contributed in no small measure to the framing and passage of the Reform Bill of 1832.

Ellice would have accepted the definition of politics as "the science of the possible." He was keenly aware of the necessity for adaptation of ideals to the realities of political power. His views are well illustrated by his reaction to the Canadian rebellions of 1837. Ellice was agreeable to the establishment of an elective council in Upper Canada, though he opposed such a change in Lower Canada because he believed that the existing system provided equal security for the British mercantile community of Montreal and for the French Canadian population. His condemnation of the extremists who had resorted to violence was not directed primarily against the radicalism of their ideas, but against what he considered their political stupidity. As he wrote to Lafontaine on March 3, 1838:

> If Mr. Papineau had followed my advice, & been satisfied with other concessions, without insisting upon an elective Council, which he knew the Government could not carry in Parliament, even if it had been recommended by Lord Gosford & the Commissioners, this crisis would not have taken place. We must now start from a different point, & you must not expect, that the changes consequent upon the late crisis, will be of the description, or of the tendency of those, contended for, by Mr. Papineau, & his followers. They have failed in the means to which they had recourse, to enforce their demands . . . .

A man with views such as these could not be expected to die before the barricades on behalf of a program. Rather, he would be content to accept the compromises necessary to achieve parliamentary majorities. Ellice was a manager, not a creative politician. He organized with great skill the Whig campaign in the election of 1831, and he displayed administrative talent as the Secretary of War in the Grey cabinet from 1832 to 1834.

Until his death, the respect in which he was held by the financial and mercantile community, and by the aristocracy, gave him more weight than his mere position as member for Coventry would indicate. When Ellice died, Joshua Bates, the elder partner in Baring Brothers, declared that, "No man, I think, has left so many friends to regret his loss. He was kind to everybody." Bates' estimate of Ellice's popularity is supported by the opinion of many other contemporaries.

The political influence of Ellice could be most helpful in advancing the interests of those whom he represented, and his value to the Hudson's Bay Company was further increased by the reputation he acquired for sound business judgment. As a parliamentary speaker he was uninspired, but as a counsellor he was highly respected. When in 1824 he criticized the Bank of England for tying up its funds in unrealizable securities, his position was proved valid. When Sir George Simpson in 1858 proposed that part of the Company's trading goods be sent by railroad to St. Paul, Minnesota, for transport to Red River, instead of being sent by the traditional Bay route, the Governor and Committee made their consent contingent upon the approval of the 75-year-old Ellice. These two incidents are

illustrative of the authority of Edward Ellice in matters of business and financial policy.

Independent wealth, marriage into influential families (his second wife was the widow of the Earl of Leicester and the daughter of the Earl of Albemarle) intimacy with most of the leading politicians of his generation, and unusual business ability—these elements combined to make Ellice a dominant factor in the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company between 1821 and 1863. His influence with politicians was usually subterranean, but it is clear that his services were important, for the Governor and Committee invariably called upon him to represent them in the promotion of political objectives.

Ellice was the liaison between the Company and the Government in the negotiations for a grant to the Company of a license of monopoly in the territory west of Rupert's Land. Parliament had provided legislative authorization for such a grant on July 2, 1821, by "an act for regulating the fur trade," but five months passed before the Government actually issued the license. This was not an unusually long period for legal advisers to agree upon the specific language of a document, but delay was vexatious to Ellice, who as early as the end of August was fretting at the slowness of the Colonial Office. Unless the license was awarded soon, he warned the Governor and Committee, "individuals of every description" in Canada might lay their claims before the Governor-General, who would transmit them to Lord Bathurst, and it was not certain that the Colonial Secretary would ignore these claims. The act of July 2, 1821, specified no individuals or group to whom an award of exclusive privileges must be made, and a formidable combination of interests, Ellice feared, was in the process of formation in Canada which might, if given time, frustrate the plans of the Hudson's Bay Company. This new North West Company in embryo, Ellice declared, was "no ordinary transaction," to be treated lightly.

The rival which Ellice feared was undoubtedly a combination of those officers and servants of the North West Company who had been excluded from the agreement of March 26, 1821, or who were dissatisfied with its terms, with business interests in Montreal who would be willing to assume the responsibilities of agents. This threat had already evaporated by August, 1821. Nicholas Garry, a member of the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, had been sent with Simon McGillivray to America to explain the provisions of the amalgamation to the "wintering partners" of the North West Company, and by consummate tact and diplomacy had been able to reconcile them to acceptance of the arrangement.

But Ellice in his appeal to the Governor and Committee to press for the early issuance of a license evidenced the characteristics which made his association with the Company so valuable during the next forty-two years. He displayed here as later an intimate knowledge of the cross-currents of British politics, excellent sources of intelligence from Canada, and easier access to the Colonial Office than any other proprietor of the Company.

His intimacy with the third Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for Colonies, almost certainly restrained the Liberal government from taking action against the Company between 1847 and 1850. Between these years, the Company was subjected to violent attacks by Alexander K. Isbister, James Edward Fitzgerald, and others. Their accusations received a sympathetic audience from powerful men. William E. Gladstone used their information with which to cudgel the Company. James Stephen, the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Colonies, supported them. Yet Earl Grey dismissed the charges. One reason for this action was that many of their statements were false and others exaggerated. But another factor seems to have been the favorable disposition of Grey toward the Company of which his uncle and close friend was a proprietor.

When the Governor and Committee decided in 1856 to apply to the Government for the dispatch of a military force to Red River, they did not approach the responsible officials directly. Rather, they asked Ellice to assist them by correspondence with his friend Lord Panmure in the War Office. The troops, a company of Canadian Rifles, were sent by the Imperial Government to Red River the following year, in large part through Ellice's representations.

His influence was even more apparent in another negotiation in 1857. It is clear from his correspondence with the Colonial Secretary Henry Labouchère that he moderated Labouchère's views of the action to be taken against the Company's rights in order to open up land around Red River for settlement. Through his son, he advised the Governor and Committee on tactics to present the most effective case, and his testimony before the Committee was an effective exposition of the advantage to British society as well as to the Company in the preservation of the monopoly of the fur trade in Rupert's Land. The Committee recommended the opening of agricultural areas to settlement, but it recommended that the monopoly in the Indian trade be continued in those areas where settlement was impossible.

Ellice's death in 1863 may be regarded as marking the end of an era. For forty-two years he had represented the interests of a fur-trade concern which had resisted the attacks of enemies in Great Britain and in Canada who sought to destroy its monopoly or to open its territories to colonization. The sale of the Company to a group which desired to emphasize colonization was a recognition that the fur-trade could no longer resist the superior claims of settlement, and Ellice lived just long enough to witness the transfer of the Company to the new proprietors.

Four men dominated the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company between 1821 and 1863. Sir John Henry Pelly and Andrew Colville determined its basic commercial policy; Sir George Simpson created in North America an efficient instrument for the conduct of the fur trade; and Edward Ellice provided wise advice on critical problems and effective liaison with government. Ellice may appropriately be regarded during these years as the Nestor of the Hudson's Bay Company. ◆

The stern wheel of a Yukon River steamboat in the shipyard at Whitehorse.

STERNWHEELERS of the YUKON

by Rosemary Gilliat

Rosemary Gilliat has done photographic assignments for British newspapers in India and Ceylon. She is now living in Ottawa.

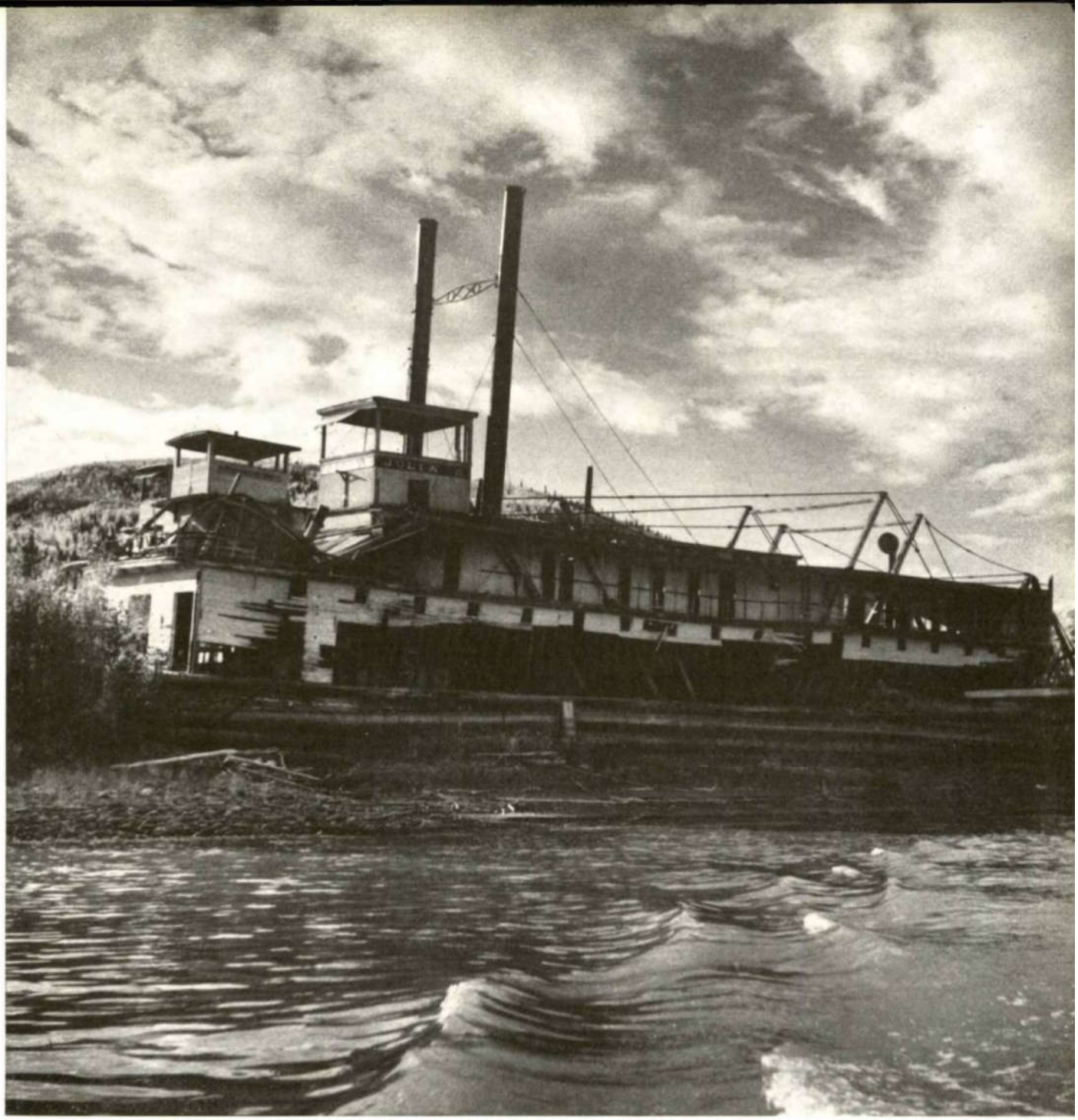
The S.S. "Whitehorse" has been plying the Yukon for fifty-three years. Here she floats away from the Whitehorse jetty and begins the three-day downstream voyage to Dawson. The upstream voyage takes two days longer.

THE day of the sternwheeler in the North is near its end. The *Distributor* and the *McKenzie River* have gone from the Mackenzie; the *Northland Echo* and the *Athabasca River* have gone from the Athabasca. With their gleaming white hulls and their big red paddle wheels they made a brave sight as they went splashing up and down the great northern rivers, pushing their strings of laden barges as far down north as the Arctic Ocean.

They have gone from the Peace, too. On the Yukon only, one tall-stacked sternwheeler remains in service—the *Whitehorse*, seen above as she starts on the old familiar Whitehorse-Dawson run. The rest have been hauled out on the river banks, where they now stand like monuments to a picturesque era that will never return.

A passenger aboard the "Yukoner" in 1898 told how when she stopped to take on wood, the captain (who was something of an exhibitionist) would send her at full speed straight for the shore, whistle blowing and flags flying. Then in the nick of time he would ring for full astern and bring her up neatly alongside the bank. After the wooding-up was over, with the band playing and girls dancing on deck, he would invite the woodcutters on board the boat for champagne.

The "Yukoner" was brought in sections from Victoria to the Yukon's mouth where she was rebuilt and christened with a bottle of champagne by "a beautiful blonde damsel en route to the dance halls of Dawson." Now the old boat lies, a mouldering, grey hulk, on the river bank at Whitehorse. All her paint has been weathered away except for her name, and that too will soon disappear.



Sternwheeler graveyard on the river bank below Dawson—the "Schwatka" (barely visible), a lower-river boat; the "Seattle No. 3," and the "Julie B." of the upper river.

Viewing the Eclipse, 1860

by Olive Knox

Illustrations from
"The Winnipeg Country"

How three scientists travelled from Fort Garry to the lower Saskatchewan to observe the sun's eclipse.

TO see a solar eclipse this summer all a Manitoban need do is to drive a few hours in a car to Minnesota. But ninety-four years ago seeing the solar eclipse was not such a simple matter. Then two astronomers and a naturalist travelled three thousand miles from Boston by canoe, covered wagon, steamer and finally Sir George Simpson's personal canoe to reach the outer belt of total eclipse on the Saskatchewan River. Their experiences are entertainingly described in a book written by the naturlist, *The Winnipeg Country*.

One of the astronomers was Simon Newcomb, who had been born in Nova Scotia of United Empire Loyalist parents. Ten years later he travelled to Gibraltar to observe the sun's eclipse; twenty-two years later found him at the Cape of Good Hope viewing the transit of Venus.

In 1860 the purpose of his trip was to observe the *Secular Variations and Mutual Relations of the Orbits and the Asteroids*. He hoped to glimpse the small planets revolving around the sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

After two and a half days of river travelling on the *Anson Northup*, launched the year before, Simon Newcomb, William Turrell, sent by the United States Navy, and H. S. Scudder, the naturalist, reached Winnipeg, then a small village. They noted the Royal Hotel with elk antlers over the door, and the North West newspaper office with its "thatched roof and plastered walls."

The Governor, William Mactavish, sent them to the Lower Fort to "make the outfit for the canoe voyage." Sir George's old north canoe—which he was never to use again, for he died a couple of months later—was brought out; it measured thirty-three feet in length, and across the middle five feet three inches.

The next thing was to choose six voyageurs. George Kippling, a part Chippeway, was recommended as the "best guide in the country. He was a fine, straight, honest-looking wiry, sharp featured fellow of about fifty-five years, with a short grizzly beard, and long black locks tinted with grey. Good-natured and full of merriment he wore a flat, pan-cake like Scotch cap set jauntily on one side of his head, a red flannel shirt, and a pair of trousers, shaped like a long bag, with very short legs."

For the bowsman, who needs must be a quick-eyed fellow, quick in emergencies, George Whiteford, a Swampy

Passenger's view from amidships in Sir George Simpson's canoe, looking aft. From left: JohnOmand, George Kippling, Narcisse Chastelland.

Olive Knox is a Winnipeg historical writer. Her latest book is "Little Giant," about Henry Kelsey.

Cree, who was a powerful, thick-set fellow was chosen; then Narcisse Chastelland for an interpreter as he spoke English, French, Chippeway and Cree. "Sprightly, careless, and vivacious, he was the life of the party and the leader in its songs."

John Omand, an Orkneyman, born at the Red River, was added to the list, and Billy Tate, part Swampy Cree, "with tremendous development of muscle, fat, and good-nature was engaged as cook and general servant. His lower lip was adorned with about a dozen straggling locks."

Francis Sinclair, "with more Swampy Cree than British blood in him," completed the quota of six.

"The height of the men varied from five feet four to five feet nine and a half inches; the average measurement of chest was a little more than forty-one inches, of the humerus nearly thirteen inches, and the forearm a little more than eleven inches. A shirt and trousers fastened by a belt, with place in it for tobacco pouch and knife, with a pair of moccasins, appeared to be their only garment. All wore long hair; Narcisse parted his at the side and left it free; the others in the middle and fastened by a handkerchief bound around the forehead. Their trousers were fastened just below the knee by a sort of garter made of twisted grasses, and to which the lower leg was usually rolled."

With their advanced pay the voyageurs added tea and sugar to the 336 lbs. of flour, and the same of pemmican supplied to them. The food supplies for the eclipse party was more varied: "60 lbs. of pemmican; 36 lbs. of ham; 50 lbs. salt beef; 45 lbs. salt pork; 37 lbs. dried buffalo meat; 75 lbs. flour; 75 lbs. biscuits; 1 bu. of potatoes; 1 lb. of tea; 12 lbs. sugar; 10 lbs. of butter, plus salt, pepper and mustard.

"Our utensils were equally primitive; knife, fork, and spoon; an iron plate and a tin dipper each, with a frying pan, iron tea-pot, tin boiling kettle, and wash dish for all cooking and culinary purposes."

Gunny sacks and oiled cloth helped to keep their provisions and equipment from getting wet, as Sir George Simpson's canoe set off with the half-ton of provisions, nine men with personal luggage, and the heavy boxes of astronomer's instruments and boxes of alcohol for the naturalist's collection.

They left the Lower Fort and did not reach Cat Head, on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg, until the seventh day; having been storm-bound at the river for two days, and almost devoured by mosquitoes, which smudges and netting over their faces did not entirely eliminate.

On the lake, sometimes paddling, sometimes helped by a crude sail, they met several brigades of barges, and the American flag, the Stars and Stripes, flying from Sir George's canoe, was saluted; "Once by a small cannon; once by the rusty flint-locks of an Indian trader in a barge crowded with Indians, dogs, and a miscellaneous cargo of merchandise, and accompanied by a dozen canoes filled with women and children. We returned the honor with our fowling-pieces."

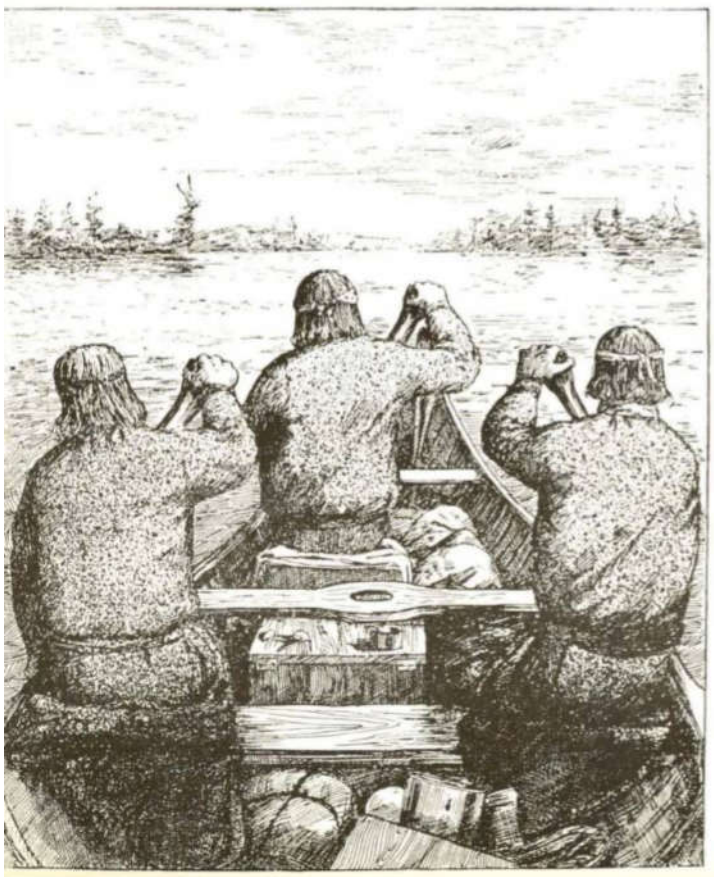
From the naturalist's description of the barges, it is easy to recognize the York boats; "They looked like the vessels of antiquity familiar in illustrated school histories, low amidship, high and peaked at bow and stern, with a central mast held in place by ropes passing from the peak to both ends and both gunwales; they were about thirty-five feet long and eight to ten wide, carried a single square sail, or were propelled by six or eight oars,—a clumsy, headlong craft, which a long sweep oar at stern managed with difficulty."

Enroute, the Americans celebrated Independence Day, with great fervour. And like the fire-cracker pranksters of today they weren't above playing jokes on the voyageurs.

After a night spent in battling mosquitoes, George, the cook, called the travellers to breakfast. One of the travellers poked a lit cannon cracker beneath the wall of the tent. It exploded with a roar and George rushed to investigate, to be met with a bunch of firecrackers flying out of the door. His surprise caused merriment among the voyageurs but later in the day George put a firecracker near the head of one of the sleeping paddlers. It's explosion turned the laughter away from the cook. But night, with only the stars to light the darkness, was the stage for the biggest Fourth of July display. Pin-wheels, serpents, and Roman candles shot into the air while the voyageurs watched with awe. "Perhaps the first fireworks which ever illuminated the waters of Lake Winnipeg," said the author.

The naturalist in the party astonished the voyageurs in other ways. He refused to let them fry a sunfish they had caught, putting it into his can of alcohol, adding to it a day later with a cross-fox. "He's going to have booze with the fish!" exclaimed George.

View looking forward: Billy Tate, George Whiteford, Francis Sinclair.



Another day Scudder asked for six fish for his collection. To his dismay, and the delight of his companions, the Indian brought him six fish filleted for the frying pan.

Scudder was generous in his praise of the voyageurs; "They dipped their paddles exactly once a second, keeping time much of the way to the quaint voyageur's songs, which Narcisse started . . . At the end of an hour, as regularly as if they kept a timepiece, they rested . . . then would come the inevitable smoke. The pipe would be filled with a mixture of tobacco and some weed, or the inner bark of the willow, flint and steel struck against the fungus of the birch; and what with talking and failures to ignite, they never got, nor appeared to care for, more than three or four whiffs, before they started again."

At Cat Head they were storm bound and when they set out again they used both sail and paddle; "the waves dashing over our gunwales, the canoe bending and twisting as each wave rushes angrily from stern to bow, and the wind threatening to tear the mast from its frail lashing."

In spite of the danger they reached Sturgeon Island, only to be storm bound for three days, and they had less than ten to reach the site of their observations.

By this time they were tired of their monotonous diet, now reduced to pemmican and bannock; the pemmican being boiled into soup and called *rub-a-boo*, or thrown into the frying pan with a little salt pork, and mixed with flour and broken biscuit, and called *rousseau*. The latter the travellers nicknamed the infidel dish.

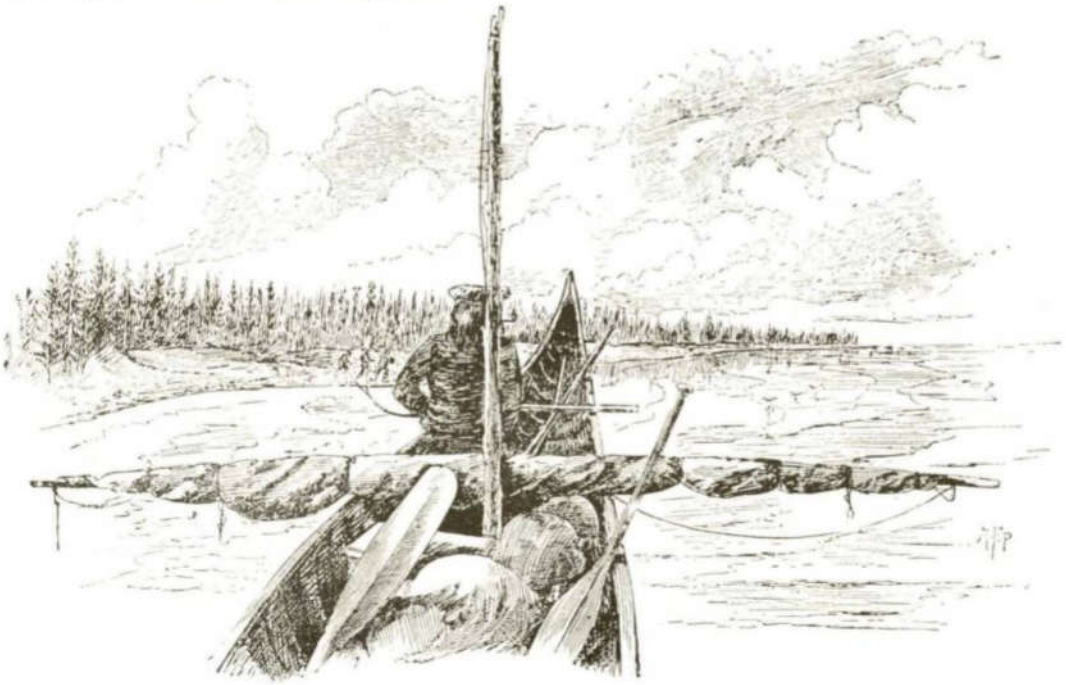
For a diet change they shot a gull with a wing spread of fifty-six inches. They found eggs and ordered ham and eggs from George for dinner—fried. They got the ham fried but the eggs were boiled. George claimed they were fresh because he had tested them by dropping them into water.

Cat Head, on the west coast of Lake Winnipeg.

The travellers distrusted the test and declared the eggs had been under a gull for at least a week; "but after four or five days of pemmican, half-hatched gull's eggs are an eagerly sought diet."

After rounding Cape Kitchinashi they tried tracking. Five days from the total eclipse they were in sight of the entrance of the Saskatchewan River. Five days to reach the mouth, portage the Grand Rapids, track and pole to a site to watch the total eclipse.

Tracking on Kitchinashi, or Long Point.



Portaging around Grand Rapids on the lower Saskatchewan.

They crossed Cross Lake, breakfasted on an island in the narrows between that and Cedar River. Here they were visited by a trader in charge of the Hudson's Bay post at Cedar Lake (John DeLeon), and that night they camped at the upper end of Cedar Lake.

Anxiously the travellers explained to George that they must at least be near The Pas to see a total eclipse. George promised to get them there by travelling all night.

But the night before the eclipse they were still a few miles from The Pas. Simon Newcomb examined a site opposite a stream from Moose Lake, and decided that the ridge of boggy ground would do for their observatory. The length of the total eclipse would be shorter here than at The Pas but it would have to do.

The voyageurs made a platform of logs to keep them above water; on four log legs they placed the naturalist's can of alcohol to serve as a stand for the three-inch telescope. A crotchet tree served as the support of the smaller telescope while boxes were placed for seats.

The makeshift observatory on the banks of the Saskatchewan below The Pas.

After a short nap the scientists took their seats which were wet from a pre-dawn shower. The crucial time approached and Newcomb explained to the voyageurs what was to happen. Then they waited. Though the clouds were moving they did not part.

"The eclipse increases; the totality approaches. No sound is heard but the tap of the screw-driver on the alcohol box, as the naturalist beats the seconds from the chronometer in his hand, and at the beginning of each minute enforces it by an audible one! two! three! The gloom deepens and deepens, and then becomes so intense that the chronometer is read with difficulty, when suddenly at eight seconds and fifteen minutes after eight, a change occurs, and we know the totality is past. Soon thereafter the clouds lift, and the remaining phenomena is observed and timed; and when an hour later, all is over we turn to breakfast.

"This then is our success. Three thousand miles of constant travel occupying five weeks, to reach by heroic endeavor the outer edge of the belt of totality; to sit in a marsh and view the eclipse through the clouds!"

The trip wasn't a total loss to young Simon Newcomb. He had material for his first scientific paper; the first of over a hundred to follow in his busy life that included not only other trips but supervisions on the construction of bigger telescopes, and towers and domes on which they would be mounted.

Forty-two days after they left Winnipeg they were back again in time to see the buffalo hunters returning from the plains. The *Anson Northup* was marooned on a sandbar and the scientists joined a Red River cart train going to St. Paul which included a buffalo and her calf. Again pemmican and bannock was part of their daily diet.

The calf died and Scudder claimed the bones, stringing them on wire to take back to Cambridge as a specimen of the frame for the staple diet of the fur traders and travellers in the territory of Hudson's Bay. ◆

Thoreau would have delighted in the beauty of the wilderness along the Peace River.

WOODLAND RETREAT

by Bradford Angier

Photos by
the author and A. L. Edwards

Inspired by Thoreau, Mr. and Mrs. Angier left the clamour and confinement of the city for the solitude and spaciousness of the Peace River country.

I SHOULD not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made concerning my mode of life. Some have asked what I got to eat, if I did not feel lonesome, if I was not afraid, and the like."

So wrote Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*, the often discussed but now seldom read classic which was the main reason for my coming to the wilderness to live. I wanted to find out if what Thoreau decided 100 years ago about life in the woods still held true today and, whether it did or not, to see if I could get a book out of it. So far I've got two books.

"I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody whom I knew as well," Thoreau apologized before

answering such queries. "*Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience.*"

That is also my excuse.

Why, first of all, asks much of our mail from readers of *At Home In The Woods* and *How To Build Your Home In The Woods*, did I so abruptly quit being a newspaperman and trade journal editor to go to the wilderness and write? As a matter of fact, the transition wasn't so abrupt. I'd been putting off going for a long time.

More and more, however, Thoreau's century-old sentences mocked what had long seemed to me the only sensible course to follow. Why, they taunted, should I be wasting the best years of my life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable freedom during the least valuable part?

The cost of a thing is the amount of life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run. When one has obtained those essentials necessary to well being—food, shelter, warmth, and clothing—there is an alternative to struggling for the luxuries. That is to adventure on life itself. So reasoned Thoreau who in 1845 went to live alone for two years and two months on the rustic shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, because he wanted to reduce existence to its essentials and learn what life really had to offer.

"*If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost. That is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.*"

The rugged sentences—whose significance grows with the years, as what is called our advancing civilization becomes increasingly frenzied—seemed even more true in this complex age than they could have been a century ago. At any rate, I wanted to find out for myself. So, it seems, do many others.

Where to go is the despair of many whose letters arrive with such provocative pleasantness almost every mail day. To these we try to point out how highly individual is the matter of selecting a wilderness niche. Our often lengthy replies mention conclusions drawn from wildlife surveys, temperature charts, forestry reports, contour maps, rainfall tables, frost graphs, botanical lists, and other such concrete factors before the personal decision, "Hudson Hope, British Columbia, must be the place for me."

Will I ever forget when I first saw the log cabins of Hudson Hope, snug beneath the Northern Lights, clustered restfully about a trim white group of red-roofed buildings neatly tied together by a chaste picket fence? "*Hudson's Bay Company,*" a since-replaced sign announced in Old English letters. Beneath this in smaller printing was the legend, "*Incorpopated 2nd May 1670.*"

With a disregard of trifles befitting a concern a century old before the United States was more than an absent-minded dent in one of Paul Revere's teapots, no one had bothered to add a corrective stroke to the erroneous "P." No one ever did, as a matter of fact.

The sight crowded my mind with visions of baled furs, of huge freight canoes, and of brightly sashed voyageurs glistening beneath their loads. Even that first time, I felt amazement at how many in the cities to the south are incredulous when they learn that the almost legendary world's oldest trading corporation still exists.

You've never smelled anything really exciting, I still obliquely answer disbelievers, until you've lingered inside one of the some 200 very much present-day Hudson's Bay Company fur trading posts. Vena, my wife and collaborator, occasionally cinches it by casually adding that the stimulation she felt when visiting Molinard's world-famous perfumery at Grasse, on the Riviera, seemed effete by comparison.

The odour of moosehide moccasins, tanned by the Indians over smoky fires, always seems to assail our nostrils deliciously. The scent of raw pelts and of venerable "Point" blankets whose markings once indicated their price in terms of beaver skins mingles with the metallic pungency of double-bitted axes and well oiled rifles. Gently insistent is the aroma of the fur press where, winters and springs, thousands of dollars in furs have been baled and sealed for shipment Outside.

"*Some have asked . . . if I did not feel lonesome.*"

I don't think so, when I stand in poplar groves during warm spring mornings and actually hear the leaves bursting open. I don't think so on the spring afternoons I pick my way from snowbank to smoking snowbank through the dripping forest, alive now with the music of a thousand tinkling rills whose veins flow with the blood of winter.

I don't feel lonely, either, when vegetables in the tiny garden I've perhaps dug in a single morning grow to amazing proportions during sunny days so prolonged that we can read outdoors at midnight.

Do I feel lonely in winter, then, when the terrestrial music of the wind begins to throb in deeper earnest? Or when smoke plumes straight upward from the cabin's stovepipe, a pillar supporting an iridescent ceiling of mist above the throbbing earth. When shrubbery and trees sag under furry white frost an inch thick, and the heavy red sun glowers through the blanched wilderness.

"*When I compared myself with other men,*" wrote Thoreau, "*it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they.*"

Vena and Bradford Angier with friend.

We know exactly how he felt. Don't most city folk work hard all their lives in order to be able to retire some day to the uncrowded places? Aren't their weeks and months measured, in millions of instances, by the few days they can snatch from each harassed year for the brief free ecstasy of camping, fishing, hunting, or just plain rusticating?

Here it is as if I were enjoying a permanent vacation, and I don't ever want to have to leave.

How about reading? We try to answer those who ask, in one form or another, that both reading and thinking are particularly important parts of wilderness living.

Publications are not casually allowed to become old here, for the North is a place which has not mislaid time. Bushmen continue far more soundly in touch with current affairs, we can and do testify, than the average subway chaser.

Interpretations of cosmopolitan problems are not only followed by radio and recent newspaper. They are painstakingly studied in periodicals handed from one inhabitant to another, often a year or two after the prophecies have or have not come to pass. Some highly paid commentators don't rate pennies along the Peace River!

"*Some have asked . . . if I was not afraid.*"

Of what—wild beasts? We point out the truism that the most dangerous animals here, as elsewhere on this continent, are the plain barnyard variety of bulls. No one at Hudson Hope has ever been hurt by a wolf, grizzly, black bear, mountain lion, or any other wild animal.

Joe Turner, however, was killed in his own yard by his bull. Leo Rutledge, an outfitter for big game hunts, has never been threatened by any wild animal, but a domestic bull kept him on an uncomfortable perch for hours and everyone else here who has spent much time around bulls agrees he's a lot more wary of them than of anything wandering wild in the bush.

And, of course, what about the "savage and ignorant" Indian? We like to answer that one offhandedly with a few words about Lillie, local octogenarian son of a Beaver chief and in the opinion of some who know him most intimately the finest gentleman they have ever met. Lillie, although much too polite to show it, has more of the traditional contempt for the egotistical greenhorn one occasionally meets than does any other Indian I know.

"*Some have asked what I got to eat.*"

Dark green nettle tops, we note, are ready for a crowning pat of butter a minute after being plunged in boiling salted water. Miner's lettuce retains its crisp tastiness when immersed in a scanty amount of steaming water that's immediately set off the heat to cool. Then there are the edible roots, tubers, seeds, barks, the fruits and nuts, the delicately wild saps, and the provocative beverage plants. There are fish and birds, mountain sheep, moose, venison, muskrat, savory bear, and succulent beaver. Even fat young wolf isn't half bad.

And if there's anything more soul satisfying than leaning up against a log with a fire warm in front of you and plenty of first rate food secured by your own ingenuity cooking at arm's length, we've never discovered it.

Then there are the "How can you stand it?" queries that everyone who spends much time in the farther places occupies a certain number of hours trying adequately to answer.

"How can you stand the silence?" people ask us, "How can you stand the month after month of cold? How can you stand the eternal whiteness?"

We'd just had three days of extreme cold, such questions recall, that had clogged the regular river channel through Rocky Mountain Canyon with ice. The waters of the Peace are of course always flowing even when the great stream is somnolent with winter, so now these waters overflowed. This excess of moisture, filling crevices and depressions as it swelled upward and outward, had solidified so quickly that it remained a glassy bulge along either shore. Down this I eased, the impetus of a dry balmy wind gentle against my back.

The ice and snow of the river were relieved by the sky-deepened reflections caught by pools and streaks of overflow. There was the occasional roar of green water, rushing from beneath the enslaving ice to have a burst of freedom before being imprisoned again. Snow-garlanded banks were festooned with huge scintillating icicles, the frozen output of springs.

The loose bark of birch trees fluttered gayly. Emerald conifers and pearl grey poplars creaked before the west wind whose warmth was intermingled with pockets of caught-up cold. It was like tarrying just inside a big city department store on a winter day and feeling a sudden bitter draft whenever someone bustles in from the street.

The trough of the wide river channel, bounded by the shore itself and then by yellowish cutbanks and eventually by wooded hills, was suffused with intense blue that filled it like liquid dye. Above this profundity, the hues lost saturation and gained in brilliance as they varied through powder blues, lilacs, and mauves finally shading into pinks.

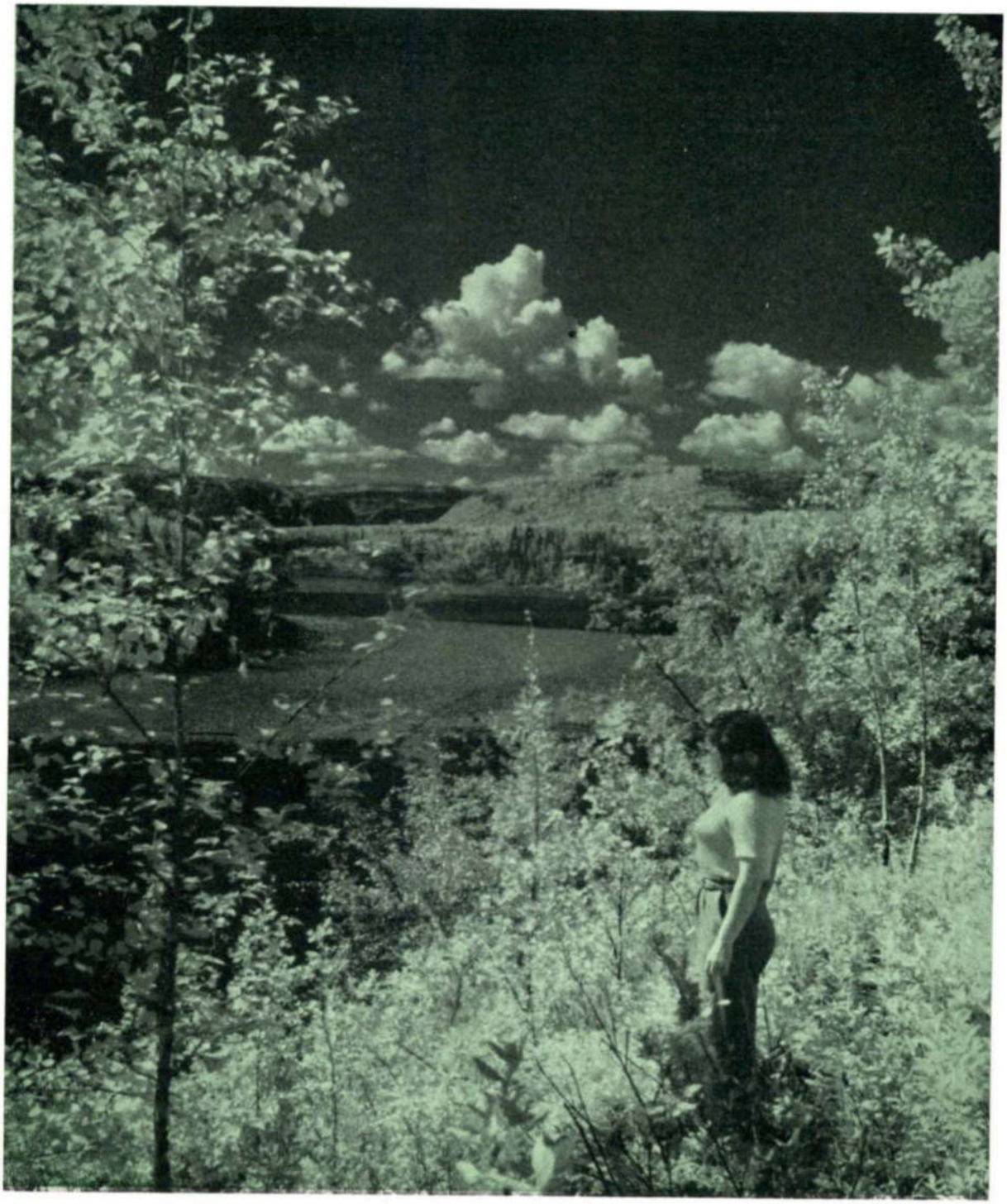
High clouds, bright with the still hidden sun, were serene yellows and golds against a pale azure sky too remote to be influenced by the earthbound river. Lower wind-hurtled clouds, streaming from the purple west toward the carnation-pink horizon in the east, took on the chromatic tints characteristic of their elevations. So much for the "eternal whiteness." And as for the eternal cold—so few spectacles during a northern winter, I decided, can be lovelier than the warm pastel music of the chinook that, in these mountains, sometimes lifts temperatures more than one hundred degrees in less than twelve hours.

Why did I ever leave the uncrowded regions? Perhaps it was because of what Thoreau had written, for Thoreau had been so right in everything else.

"*I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there,*" he said, "*It seemed to me that I had several more lives to lead, and could not spare any more time for that one.*"

How did city life, with its grimly assertive amusements for an unamused multitude, work out after this retreat from the unimproved works of God to man-made civilization?

The clamour of birds winging northward, free as air, made us sit up soberly one city night and take stock. It



Summer comes to the Peace.

came to this. We were working harder than we wanted, at things we didn't like to do. Why? In order to afford the sort of existence we didn't care to live!

The clangour of the departing birds blended with memories of the Peace River now bright with ice cakes, of poplar buds exploding open on sweet intense mornings with the ardour of popcorn, and of grass and wild foods flaming up like a spring fire—as if the earth were sending forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun.

"*If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.*" Distant throaty cries sounded hoarsely against a background of restless city movement. "*Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.*"

The words struck like a precisely inked rubber stamp against a still unwritten page of our life, and it was as if time was moving inexorably past along with the disappearing birds.

A lot of memories came crowding back, clear and poignant as bars of a remembered song. I found myself trying to shut them off, struggling to put my mind on something as impersonal as the hopeless and yet always hopeful hurry of traffic. Then Vena remembered something we'd learned just the other day.

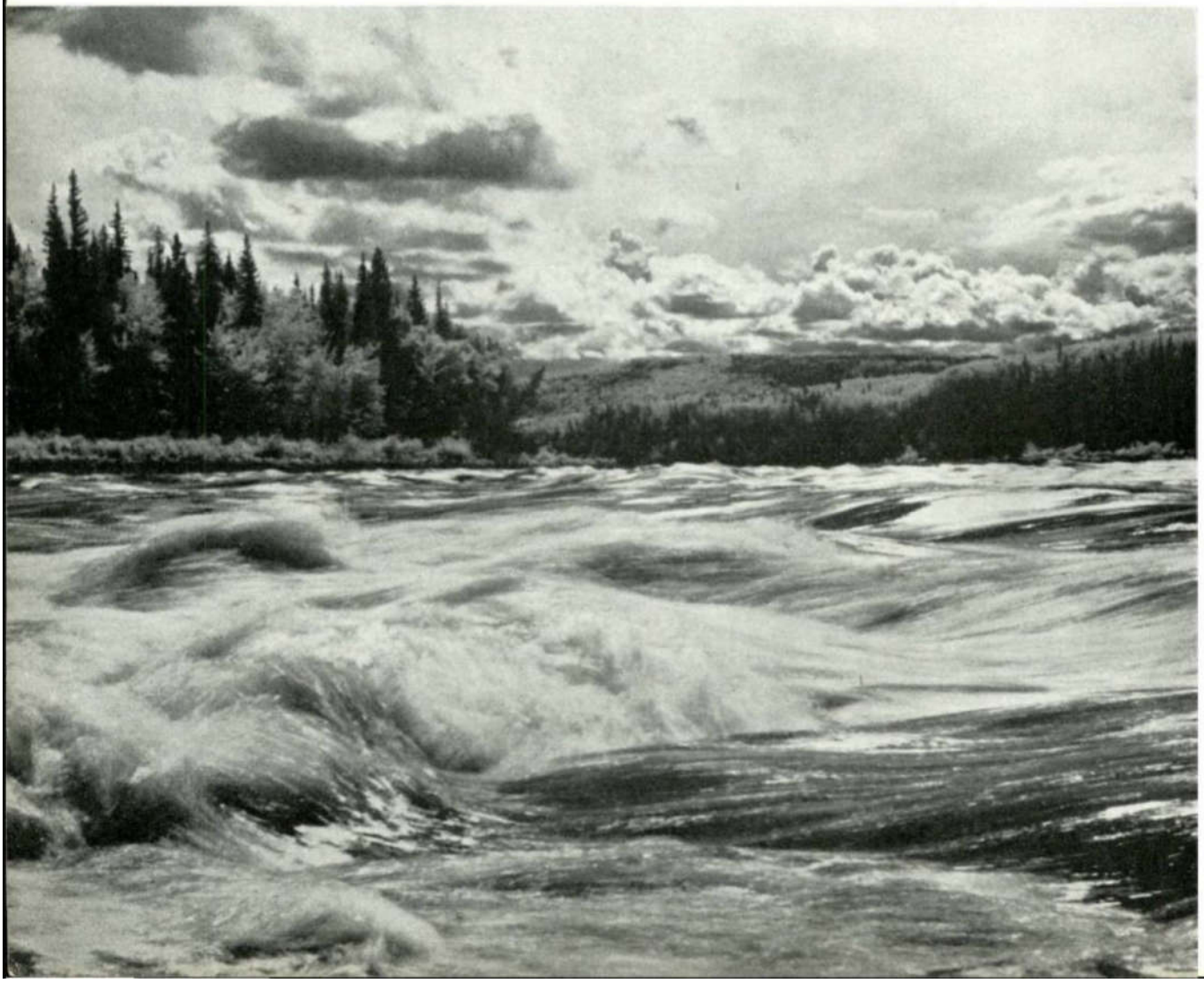
Thoreau had left his cabin and trees, yes, but he'd moved only as far as the main settlement of Concord to which he'd walked regularly from Walden Pond, anyway. Thoreau hadn't mentioned it in *Walden*, having written that earlier, but nevertheless he'd spent the rest of his life roaming about the same woods.

So I returned to Hudson Hope where Vena and I are writing these words. It was as if I'd been away a long time. We'll probably need the brief tense contrast of cities again if only for business reasons, yet nowhere but here I believe can ever be our real home—where we, too, can live deep and suck out all the marrow of life.

A lamp is once more our electricity, a pair of pails our water system. There are other inconveniences, too. Well, maybe some folks would call them that. We did before we realized they're also freedoms. If one doesn't have running water, there's no worry about meters and bursting pipes. If stoves crackle with your own wood, high fuel costs and labor management difficulties are something to plague the other fellow.

"*I learned this, at least, by my experiment. If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to lead the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*" ◆

Peace River in a turbulent mood.



Northward by Road and Rail

by J. Lewis Robinson

The last ten years have seen a striking extension of transport routes into northern Canada.

WITHIN the past decade several road and rail extensions have been thrust northward into the less populated parts of Canada. This northward movement has not been in the far north, but in "Middle Canada"—that zone which lies directly north of the continuously settled parts of southern Canada. The Northwest Territories are still beyond the pioneer fringe of Canadian settlement, and will remain so until the lands and other resources of middle Canada are being utilized. From Labrador to British Columbia these new transport lines are tapping new resources, and will carry Canada's increasing population a little farther into our sparsely inhabited regions.

It was during the second quarter of this century that settlement began to penetrate into the Northwest Territories. As yet, however, settlement in the Territories is still minor in numbers, compared with the density of population in southern Canada. The low density of population in the North is reflected by the lack of any transportation network. The water routes which were developed around the turn of the century still carry the bulk of the freight. The only major change has been in the expansion of air services in the two decades of 1920-40. Northern air transport has been particularly valuable and strategic, but still serves few people and carries small loads in comparison with the rest of Canada.

In eastern Canada, transport developments have been related to the mining industry. For the first time in over twenty years Canada is once more beginning to build railways. The big iron ore deposits on the Labrador-Quebec boundary have been proven large enough to require a railway to move them southward to iron-hungry industrial United States. We have read frequently about the 360-mile railway now under construction from Sept Iles, on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to the iron field. The line will climb up the valley of the Moisie River and its tributary, the Nipissis, which has cut a pass down through the rocky hills that rise steeply along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf. Once on top of the upland of the Canadian Shield, the railway rolls through the dense coniferous forests, past innumerable lakes left by the Glacial Age, around knobby, bare-rock hills, and into the open woodland and tundra of the region around Burnt Creek, the northern terminal. In addition to bringing out iron ore by 1954, the route can be used to tap new pulpwood supplies for the pulp and paper mills of the St. Lawrence estuary. The riches in pulp and minerals which the railways opened up in Northern Ontario may now soon be forthcoming from eastern Quebec.

To the westward in central Quebec, a new road has pushed northward from Lake St. John into the Chibougamau region. Chibougamau mineralization, like Labrador iron ore, has been known for a long time, but lack of accessibility discouraged development. The proving-up of several good base metal deposits since World War II has been aided by the Quebec government which turned a winter tractor-trail into an all-season gravel road. Although the region is not yet in production, the road connection helped to lower transport costs for supplies and equipment, and will extend Quebec's mining frontier northward. The Lake St. John region, a pioneer zone itself a few decades ago, is now an established part of "settled" Canada, and the jumping-off place for new northward penetration. The new Chibougamau road will enable the agricultural produce of the Lake St. John lowland to be sold in the mining camps to the northward.

Ontario has less "unsettled" northland than the other central provinces. Because of the transit position of Northern Ontario between the settled areas of Eastern Canada and the Prairie Provinces, transport lines were built through the area early in Canada's development. But even in Ontario one new road has been built northward, similar to the pattern which is developing in other provinces. This is the road connecting the gold-mining district of Red Lake to our major east-west transport routes through northwestern Ontario. The road not only reduces the cost of living in this northern mining centre; it also gives the residents a more secure feeling of being connected with "settled" Canada.

In Manitoba, the second of Canada's new northern rail extensions was recently completed to Lynn Lake. The nickel deposits of Lynn Lake, although their present known reserves are about one-third as large as the world's chief source at Sudbury, are certainly rich enough to pay for the cost of constructing a rail line. With the disappearance of the last base metal reserves at Sherridon, Manitoba, most of its houses and its mining equipment have been transported northward by winter tractor train, and a new mining town has arisen at Lynn Lake. Undoubtedly, the new rail line will do much to encourage further prospecting along the route, just as the Hudson Bay Railway to Churchill led to increased mineral exploration twenty years ago. Canada has only tapped the outer edge of the

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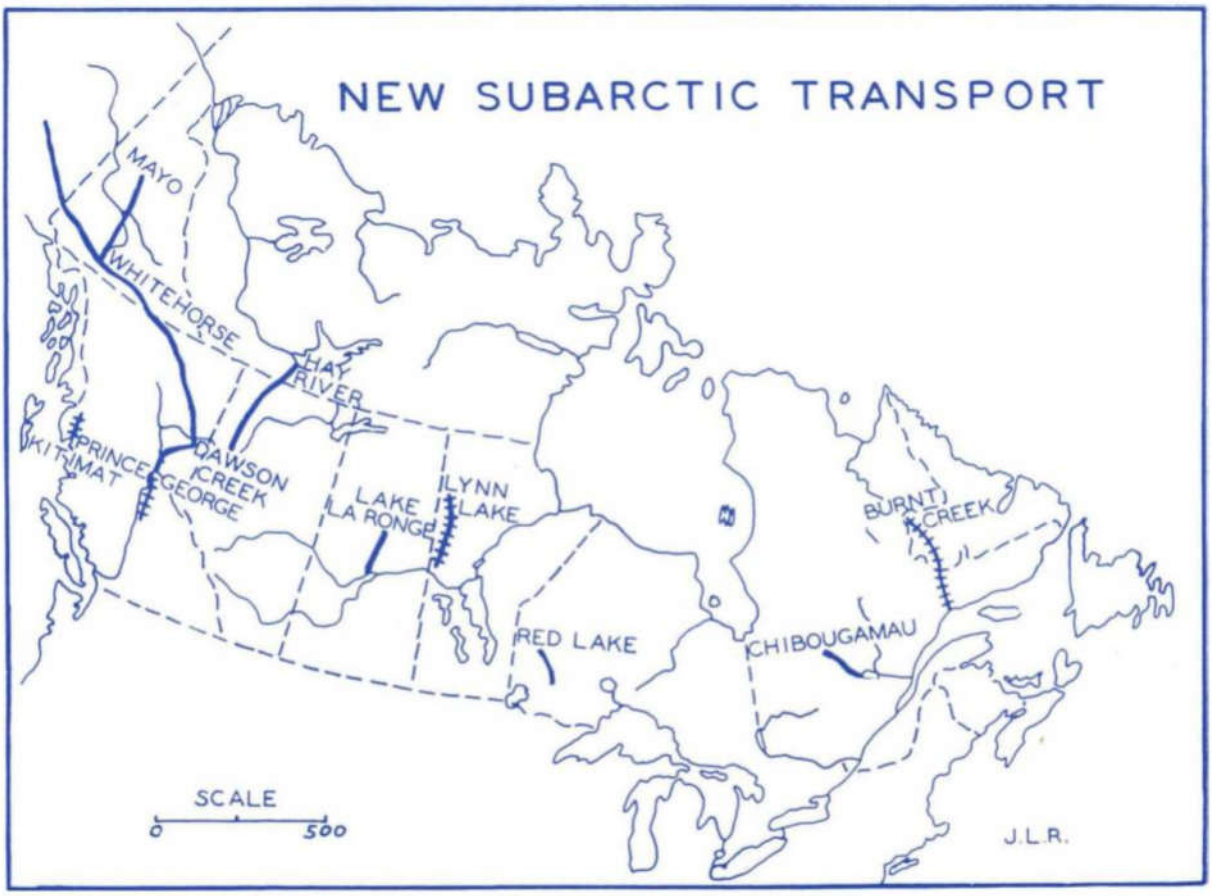
almost two million square miles of Precambrian rock of the Canadian Shield which surrounds Hudson Bay. As these new railroads reach known large deposits in Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, it is only to be expected that less valuable deposits will then become economical when the transport is available nearby. Canada will move north as mineral wealth rolls southward.

Northern Saskatchewan has long been hampered by a lack of northern transport lines. Whereas Manitoba had the Churchill railway across its northland, and Alberta had a line to Waterways which connected with a northern water route, there was no comparable opening in between into northern Saskatchewan. That province's pioneer energies have been concentrated in her agricultural fringe east and west of Prince Albert. Canada's last flurry of railway building, prior to 1930, opened up these lands to agricultural settlement. However, as in the other parts of Canada, new transport lines are now being extended, such as the road to Lac La Ronge. This road taps the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, which has yielded mineral wealth in the eastern provinces, and has done much to encourage prospecting in Saskatchewan. Of more importance for the present, however, the road opens up a resort and tourist area of lakes and cool forests which appeals to people of the dry grasslands to the south.

Alberta's northland has always been recognized as important, as shown by the size and growth of Canada's largest northern city, Edmonton. Out of Edmonton, rail lines radiated towards the northeast to the Beaver River agricultural fringe, northward to Waterways which gave access to the Mackenzie River Valley, and in the northwest to the Peace River District. These rail connections were all made by 1930, however, and for two decades afterwards there have been no further northward extensions. The chief recent development has been the clearing of the Mackenzie Highway from Grimshaw, in the Peace River area, to Hay River, on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. This all-season highway, which was improved from winter tractor trails, is the first permanent road to enter the Northwest Territories and also to connect the North with the Canadian highway system. Economically, the road has been highly important in supplying an outlet for the fish products of Great Slave Lake, and has encouraged lumbering along the road in the Northwest Territories. Agriculture of the Peace River has been given access to a northern market, and the pioneer fringe has moved another step northward along the highway, now being fifty miles north of the Peace River itself.

The building of the Alaska Highway across northeastern British Columbia and southern Yukon is a well-known

The road and rail extensions beginning with the building of the Alaska Highway are clearly shown on this map of Canada.



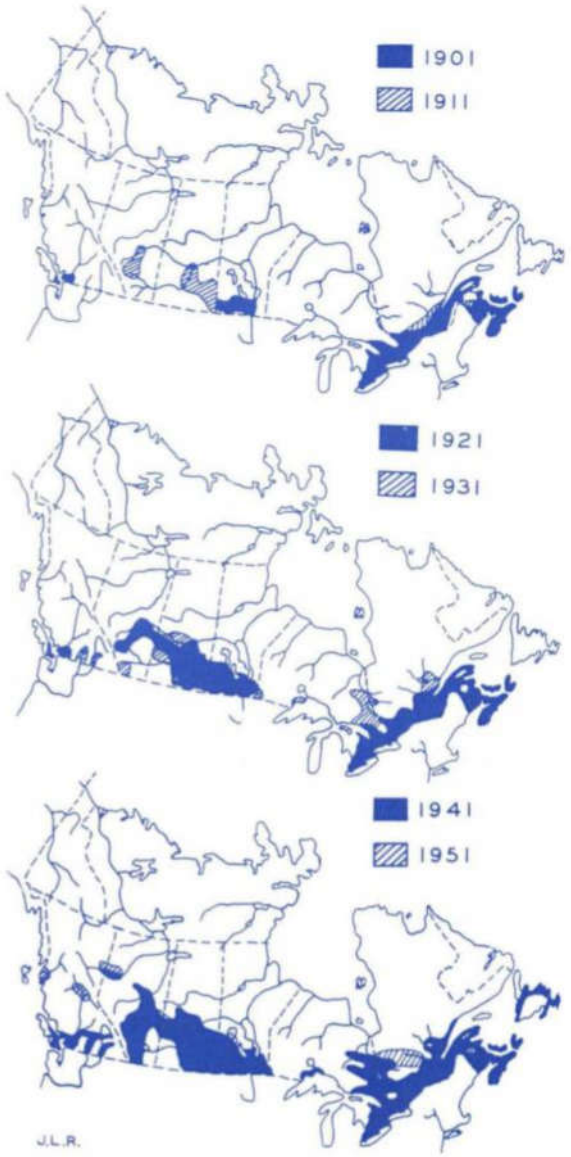
highlight of Canada's northward transportation penetration. To British Columbia, however, the Alaska Highway is much less valuable than the recently-completed Hart Highway, which links the Peace River area with the settled parts of central British Columbia. The Peace River area is almost the forgotten part of B.C., lying east of the Rocky Mountains. It should now have more trade connections with Prince George, in central B.C., instead of looking to Edmonton.

Central British Columbia was also the scene of the third rail extension in Canada, and the first one to be completed in over two decades. After many years of hopes and promises, the B.C. government-owned Pacific Great Eastern (P.G.E.) railway was finally extended northward from Quesnel to Prince George, where it links up with the northern C.N.R. line to Prince Rupert. Already the new rail line is proving of great assistance to the lumber and agricultural economy of central B.C. A fourth new railway will be added to Canada's network shortly when the line is completed from the new aluminum smelter at Kitimat, on the central west coast of B.C., northward to the C.N.R. line out of Prince Rupert. The agricultural progress of the belt of good land along this northern C.N.R. should therefore increase with the access to the market of Kitimat.

The Alaska Highway across Southern Yukon has been well-publicized, and has undoubtedly brought wider development to formerly inaccessible areas. It also "made" Whitehorse, which became a cross-roads of transport. The combination of a north-south rail and water route from Skagway to Whitehorse and Dawson, with the east-west route of the Alaska Highway, gave Whitehorse the strategic geographical position which denotes future growth. Its position has been further improved with the completion of Canada's most northerly all-season road—that from Whitehorse to Mayo, in east-central Yukon. This road, which winds through forests and around mountains, was completed from parts of the old winter stage-coach trails which were abandoned long ago. The highway is another of those which was built primarily to serve a mining region—the rich lead-zinc-silver ores of the Mayo-Keno region. However, it is serving a wider purpose in assisting general Yukon expansion, and may bring other possible mining properties into development.

This summary of Canadian northward transport extensions should remind Canadians that at last we really are moving northward. Because of our great east-west width and small population along the southern border, Canada has been chiefly concerned with constructing east-west links which could draw her people together. When these lines were completed by about 1920, a period of consolidation followed, as the good lands in southern Canada were being filled up. Now that Canadians stretch in a solid belt from sea to sea across the southern part of the country, we are turning our eyes northward. Although many would tell us to jump far to the northward, it seems wiser to develop those resources closest to our present settlement.

Although many advance guards have moved far into the north—aided by invaluable air transport—the main wave



The spread of population density of five or more persons per square mile, between 1901 and 1951, is depicted in these three maps compiled and drawn by the author.

of Canadian settlement is only now taking another step northward. Whereas the last waves of settlement—those of the 1920s and 1930s—were chiefly agricultural, the present frontier is being extended by discoveries of new minerals. Most of the new transport extensions have been to mining regions. They will serve few people at first, but the resources which they bring south will have a notable impact upon the Canadian economy. Other settlers will, however, follow these northward transport penetrations. The roads and rail lines are fingers pointing the way northward into the land of Canada's future. Since southern Canada is almost filled, at our present standards of living, the only direction in which our population *may* expand is northward. This past decade has seen the transport expansions; the next decade should see the northward migration of people. ◆

INDIAN CANOE MAKERS

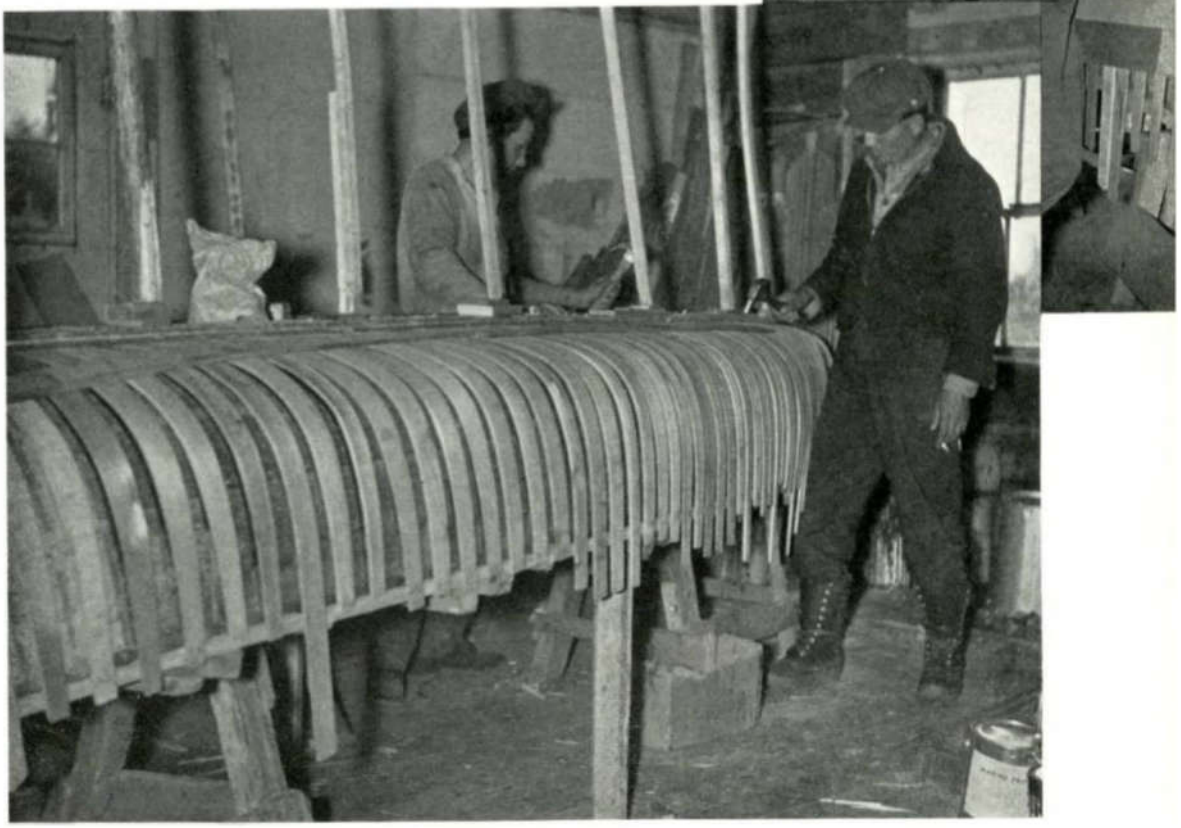
Story and Pictures
by Stephen Greenlees

At Rupert's House on James Bay, Indians have been turning out canoes for many generations that are specially adapted to the needs of the country.

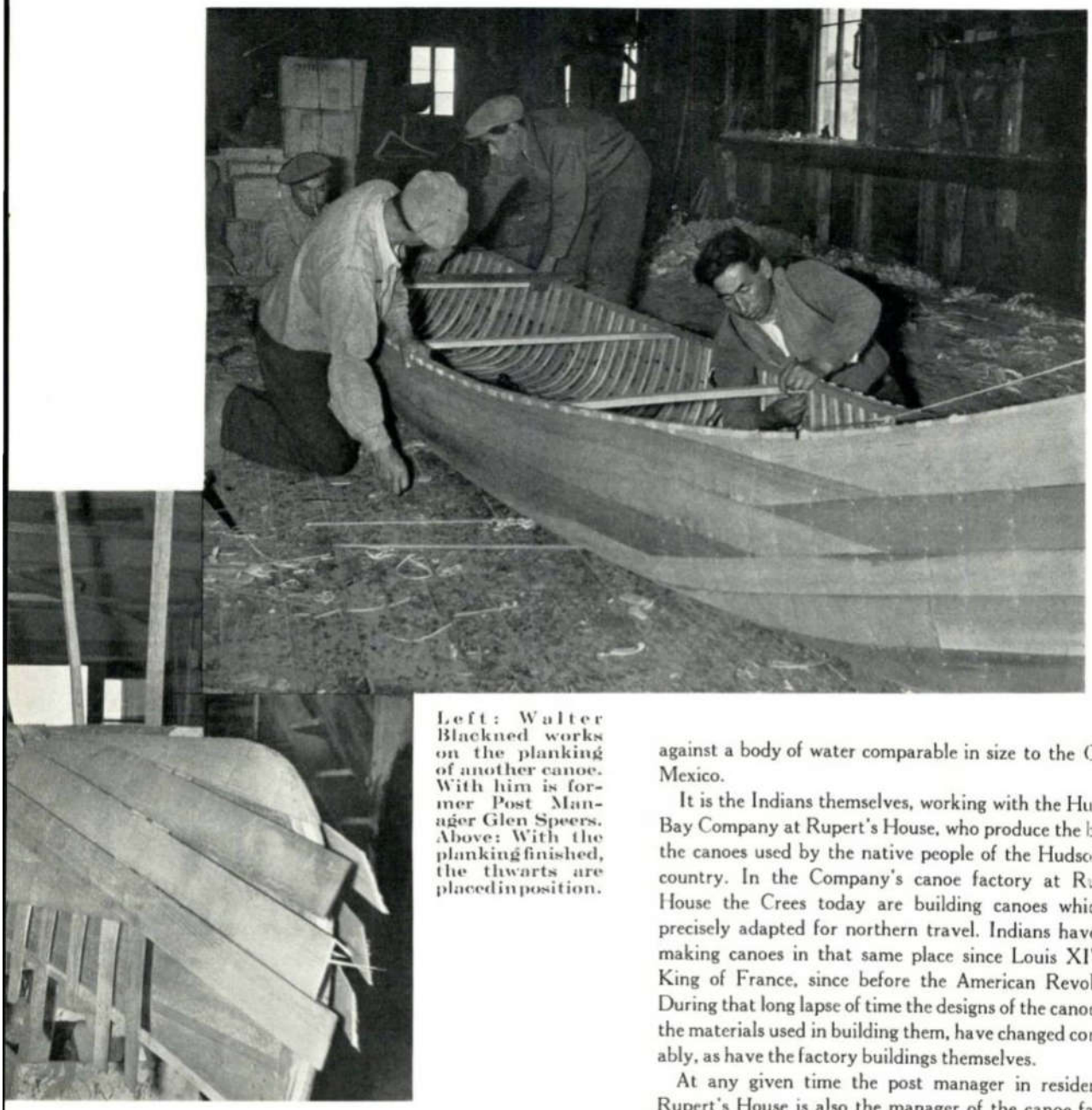
TO the Indians of the north country the canoe has always been a necessity of life. Without one, the bush Indian in summer is as immobilized as a cowboy without a horse. The big, fast-running rivers which empty into James Bay and Hudson Bay are highways for the paddler in a terrain where there are no roads. Human beings are not constructed to carry loads of supplies on their backs for more than a limited distance, especially through dense spruce forests or across miles of muskeg, and so in the north during the summer the answer is the canoe, since only an occasional plane flight is within the financial capacity of the natives.

Good canoes are not easy to build. They have to be strong enough to endure rough treatment, light enough to portage, and they must be designed with the particular requirements of the district in mind and the kind of work to be done. For hunting, in a district of small lakes and

Below: Over the iron "ribs" of a wooden canoe mould, the steamed cedar ribs are bent when still wet, nailed to the gunwales, and allowed to dry. Here Billy Stephen and Bert Whiskychan start to nail down the planks.



Stephen Greenlees has travelled widely in eastern and central Canada, making still and moving pictures of native life for the National Film Board and other organizations. He now heads his own company.



Left: Walter Blackned works on the planking of another canoe. With him is former Post Manager Glen Speers. Above: With the planking finished, the thwarts are placed in position.

little rivers, Indians do not need the same type of craft which is necessary for freighting supplies on big water. The best canoes today are the result of a long history of experimentation dating back to the era of the original birchbark craft. Even in the days of the birchbark there were different kinds of canoes for various kinds of use.

The broadest expanse of canoe country on the continent is the great basin of Hudson Bay. This is a region, too, of difficult canoe travel. A score of wide, tumultuous rivers drop into the Bay, rivers infested with hundreds of dangerous rapids. On these turbulent waterways the Indians must travel from as far as 300 miles inland to the salt water of Hudson Bay. Moreover, some of the Crees of that region have to make their way up and down the coast of the Bay itself, pitting their skill and the fitness of their canoes against a body of water comparable in size to the Gulf of Mexico.

It is the Indians themselves, working with the Hudson's Bay Company at Rupert's House, who produce the bulk of the canoes used by the native people of the Hudson Bay country. In the Company's canoe factory at Rupert's House the Crees today are building canoes which are precisely adapted for northern travel. Indians have been making canoes in that same place since Louis XIV was King of France, since before the American Revolution. During that long lapse of time the designs of the canoes, and the materials used in building them, have changed considerably, as have the factory buildings themselves.

At any given time the post manager in residence at Rupert's House is also the manager of the canoe factory. Glen Speers, who was post manager when I visited Rupert's House in 1952, had become so interested in the factory that he looked up all the old records he could find relating to it there. The conversations I had with him, plus our perusal of the records, led to the writing of this article.

Originally, the canoes built at the Rupert's House factory were of course birchbarks. They were made for freighting, 30 feet long, strongly constructed and serviceable. These craft could, and did, withstand the rough going of very long trips such as the journey from Rupert's House to Lake Mistassinni and back. Indian families built their own smaller canoes at their own camps, for hunting, fishing or family travel. I can testify, from having owned a birchbark canoe and having travelled many hundreds of miles of rough canoe country in it, that the bark craft, properly made, is by no means flimsy or frail. It is not so

strong and durable as a good canvas-covered canoe, however, nor so easy to paddle.

Due to the way in which the bark has to be lapped around the canoe frame, the narrow, inch-long indentations characteristic of birchbark are at right angles to the direction of paddling, which slows down the canoeman's speed. Also, even good bark has little knobs and warts which can easily get scraped off when the canoe touches rocks or shale, causing leaks which must be patched with gum. The spruce or pine gum is rendered less prone to drying and cracking by heating it before application and mixing a little lard in with it. The mixture must have no more than the necessary minimum of lard, however, for otherwise the gum will melt and run in warm weather. The frequent re-calking of the joins between the different sections of bark is a necessity which becomes tedious when the canoe is in constant use.

Despite the superiority of canvas-covered canoes, the old bark freighters built at the Rupert's House factory used to make tremendous journeys in the Hudson Bay country, from James Bay up the Rupert River and on to the Waswanipi post, to Nichikun and to Pike Lake, sometimes halfway across what is now Quebec Province to the Lake Nichikun post. These great canoe trips were, to the Indians of those days, not particularly noteworthy, although nowadays a plane lost in that uninhabited wilderness is so far away from civilization that it might almost as well have wandered among the mountains of the moon.

Such unusually long trips, which were generally undertaken for the purpose of carrying supplies to a post and bringing furs out, are not often made today on Company business, since aircraft have taken over such time-consuming jobs. But many long journeys remain economically reasonable and are still the order of the day in the north. Individual Indians, or pairs of them, still make prodigious trips like those of long ago to get to new trapping grounds in the fall and back home again in the spring. I remember talking with a Cree named Albert Trapper at the Waswanipi post a few years ago who had, alone, made a journey from Waswanipi to Lake Nichikun and return, with a winter's hunt for marten in between. This was a safari of a thousand miles by the tortuous route which the canoeman had to follow, not only on big rivers but across wide, windswept lakes and along little creeks, with countless hard portages.

For such a labour of Hercules, Albert Trapper's canvas-covered canoe built at Rupert's House saved him a great deal of time and strength that birchbark canoeing would have entailed. Similarly, the modern Rupert's House craft used by larger bands of Indians save effort and time in paddling, extra weight and cost of the food involved in the increased time, and labour which would otherwise be necessary to keep a birchbark canoe well-gummed to prevent leaks. Even with the canvas-covered canoe, the design must be right lest the craft overturn in rapids or force the canoeman to bypass white water by bone-wearying portages. Metal or plywood canoes which have proved useful farther south, particularly for sporting purposes, have not yet been adopted by the northern Indians. If a hole is staved in the bottom of a canvas-covered canoe the traveller can permanently repair the damage en route with canvas patching and cement which he carries on long trips, plus a little carpentry with axe and knife. Repair jobs like this are not so easy with canoes made of more recently introduced materials. In addition, the canvas-covered type remains cheaper for the Indian to buy.

The records show that it was in 1902 when John Iserhoff was chief of the Rupert's House band that the first canvas-covered canoe was built there. This was the first canvas-covered craft to appear anywhere in the James Bay country,* and was fashioned according to a design derived from observation of canoes at points farther south. It was built alongside birchbark canoes in the Hudson's Bay Company canoe factory at the post. This first canvas-covered canoe was constructed exactly like a bark canoe, however, except for the outside covering.

The ribs, the lightweight slats for the bottom and walls, and all the rest of the frame were the same as required for a bark canoe, with canvas for the outside layer instead of birchbark. There were no nails nor screws anywhere in the canoe. The bindings and fastenings were entirely of split spruce roots in the traditional bark canoe style. The experiment revealed to the Indians that canvas made a quite durable outside surface, less prone to crack than bark, with no seams to spring leaks, and offering less resistance to the water when the canoe was moving. For the next eighteen years the factory made both birchbark and canvas-covered canoes, all on the old-time birchbark pattern without nails.

The shift to the modern type of canoe came about in an historically interesting way. During the first quarter of this century the Revillon Frères fur company had established a string of trading posts on Hudson Bay. With keen competitive instinct, Revillon Frères determined to woo the trappers by offering them canoes of the latest modern canvas-covered type. Accordingly they obtained such canoes from a small factory at Lake St. John and introduced them on Hudson Bay. There was no doubt about the Indians' preference for these canoes, which resulted in the Hudson's Bay Company importing modern canoes from the Canadian factories shortly thereafter. It was immediately apparent, however, that all these canoes brought in from outside, from wherever bought or whoever they were sold by, were costing the Indians too much on Hudson Bay, due to transportation charges.

To deal with the situation thus created, Angus Brabant, Fur Trade Commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company, secured a canoe-building mould from the Boat and Canoe Building Company of Edmonton in 1920, and had the mould shipped to the Rupert's House factory. As it turned out, the design of this mould was not well adapted for the kind of work performed by canoes in the Hudson Bay country, but the mould served as a model for the construction of other moulds of improved design. A mould is basically an iron-ribbed skeleton around which the wooden ribs and the thin planks of a canoe are built, as a suit of clothes is made on a tailor's dummy. The gunwales are tied on the mould first, then the ribs laid on and the planking nailed

* John Rae used one in his expedition of 1846-7 at Repulse Bay.

onto the ribs. The pointed ends of the nails are bent back into the wooden canoe ribs when they hit the iron ribs of the mould during hammering. After this the canvas, heated and stretched taut on a special stretcher, is laid tightly over the canoe planking and secured in place when the outer gunwale pieces are nailed over it.

From Mr. Weir, manager of the Boat and Canoe Building Company, Mr. Brabant had also secured a sketch of a canvas-stretching apparatus. Moreover, Inspector Phillips of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who had visited a modern canoe factory in the east, outlined for the Rupert's House people an up-to-date factory setup for efficient canoe-building.

Two new moulds, built like the Edmonton one but with the shape altered to suit conditions in the territory around Hudson Bay, were thereupon constructed at Rupert House. The two moulds differed from each other in certain respects. Canoes from one mould were called the "Roberval" and from the other the "Indian." The latter style, which came to be called the "Rupert" canoe, had more upward bend from the centre of the keel to the ends than the Roberval, and the ends themselves were built higher above the stem piece. This design was intended for heavy rapids such as those through which the Fort George and Eastmain Indians had to paddle. Even the Roberval style had considerable rise fore and aft to enable the canoemen to shift the direction of travel quickly while running rapids. The two designs, only slightly altered in the course of the years, and now built in several different sizes, have endured since Mr. Brabant first modernized the Rupert's House canoe factory. They are the best canoe styles which have ever been used around the Bay.

Today the Rupert's House factory has one mould for the 16-foot Rupert, three for the 18-foot Roberval, one for the 20-foot Rupert, and one for the 23-foot Rupert, a canoe which carries a ton of freight plus men and gear on the rough waters of the Fort George, Kanaaupscow, Rupert and other turbulent rivers. The 23-foot canoes and even the 20-footers are used by the Eastmain Indians and other bands for coastal travel out on the waters of the Bay. All these models are also built with a square stern to accommodate the outboard motors which many of the Indians use today.

While the Indians are still a highly rugged breed of canoemen they are not eager to tote the 30-foot freighters which the tribesmen of earlier times used to carry over the portages. The modern Indian has found that he can do his freighting with craft whose maximum length is 23 feet, a size which is much more manoeuverable on hilly, twisting trails. Consequently the factory no longer produces the old-time 30-footers.

Stretching the canvas over the hull.

This nearly finished canoe has a square stern for an outboard motor. Note the canoe mould with iron "ribs."

A characteristic of the craft built at the Rupert's House factory is their very strong construction, with heavyweight canvas. The stem pieces are fashioned from "juniper" wood cut near the post. The cedar for the ribs is split by hand and thus is straight-grained and very sturdy. To get the wood from which these ribs are made the Indians go up the Nottaway River to places where the cedars grow particularly large. The ribs are roughly cut on the spot and brought back to the factory to be dressed down with the traditional crooked knife before being steamed and placed on the mould.

Much of the white spruce for the gunwales is cut around the district. Lumber for the canoe planking is brought in from outside, from the railhead at Moosonee, and cut at the Rupert's House factory. In particularly busy seasons some cedar for the ribs is imported too. The canvas, nails and paint are also brought in from outside. Otherwise all parts come from the Bay itself, and all the construction work is done in the Rupert's House factory.

Since the introduction of the new construction methods in the early 1920s the Crees at the post have built more than 1,300 modern canoes. This native industry has provided a steady income for the factory staff itself, which is all-Indian, and has supplied canoes of exactly the right type to the Indians of the James Bay and Hudson Bay basin. Moreover, the Indians have been able to buy these canoes at prices which they can afford, a highly important consideration. Throughout, the aim of the Hudson's Bay Company in operating the factory has been to build the canoes on a non-profit basis, the prices charged just defraying the cost of the materials and wages involved. To the Indian canoeman of the Bay, the Rupert's House canoe factory has proved, down the years, an indispensable and highly-valued institution. ◆

YORK BOAT COMING!

For a child, a trip by York boat was a pretty exciting affair.

by Dorothy L. Boggiss

IT was early. The mist was rising from the water. In the bays and along the shore it still hung in milky waves. The wharf was slippery with dew, but Mokhoman, our steersman, leaned against the mooring post slowly tamping down the tobacco in his old, black pipe. As he saw us running toward him his dark, impassive, stoic, Indian face lit up in a great smile of welcome.

"What sort of day is it going to be, Mokhoman?" my brother asked.

Slowly he touched the match to the tobacco.

"I smoke, then I tell you, Makoostigwan," he promised.

The smoke wreaths curled upward around his head. Slowly he turned East to the rising sun, then South, then West, and last to the North sniffing the air as he turned. Holding our breath we waited. Mokhoman always told us correctly and today of all days we wanted a sunny day, for we were starting that morning down the turbulent, mighty Nelson River in the huge York boats which lay beside the wharf, the water lapping gently against their seamed and tarry sides.

At last Mokhoman took the pipe from between his teeth.

"Fine day," he stated flatly "Sun shine bright, make you brown like Indian, Panasesis," he added to me.

Eagerly we watched as the crew loaded the last of the bales and boxes. The York boats waited with their white sails wound around the great masts, the masts lowered across the thwarts and the long, heavy oars lying inside the gunwales. They looked like giant birds resting with folded wings on the slowly lifting and lowering water.

At last everything was ready. The rest of our party arrived and we scrambled aboard our boat. The Indians had made a cozy place for Mother and Dad but we crawled in over the bales up to the wide platform in the stern on which Mokhoman stood to manage the huge steering oar.

The crew men took their places at the sweeps and the great boats swung away from the wharf out into the still water.

The rowers sat on the opposite side of the boat to that on which their blade dipped into the water, and they were seated alternately on left and right sides of the boat facing the stern, one man to each oar. They rose to their feet as they leaned on the huge sweep, pushing it forward and down to lift the blade out of the water, then sank to a sitting position on the thwart as it bit deeply into the water again. Then, as they pulled and strained mightily, the muscles of their arms, shoulders and backs stood out like bands of iron. Most of them wore around their foreheads and jet black hair a strip of crimson calico to keep the perspiration from rolling down into their eyes. The hand grip of the oars was bound with cloth or a strip of deer skin to prevent their hands from blistering. With their swarthy complexions, their flashing white teeth and bright, black eyes, they brought to mind vividly stories of pirates and galley slaves—except that these were laughing, kindly ones.

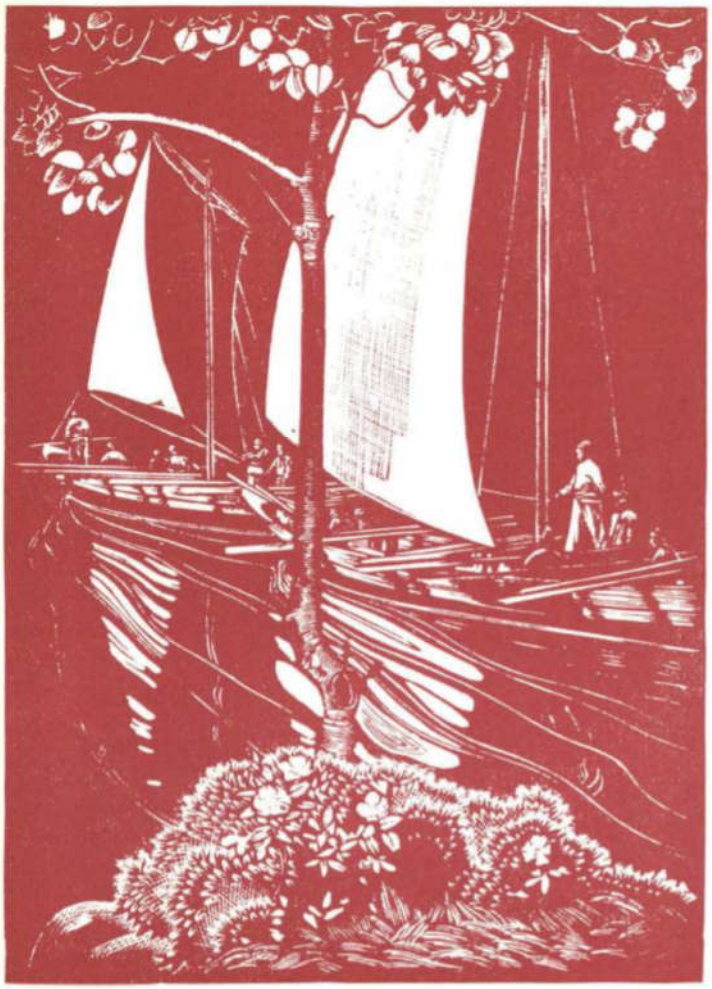
The York boat following kept a good distance behind us, its eight oars lifting and lowering in unison gave the impression of a giant bug walking across the water, and the noise we made as we travelled woke the echoes along the shore and sent them rumbling from bank to bank. The oars left the water with a hollow, booming explosive sound like a clap of thunder which could be heard on land before the boats could be seen. (For years and years I thought that the sharp report and echoing rumble were made, not by the oars, but by the men as they came thumping down on the thwarts!) This, combined with the screech and squeal of the heavy oars grinding against the thole pins and the chant of the rowers as they toiled, composed the melody which always announced, "York boat coming!"

Riding there in the boat we did not seem to hear the rolling of the hollow boom but instead a shorter, sharper explosion of sound. But often on land we would hear their thunder rolling across Little Playgreen Lake and I'd say to my brother, "Listen, a thunder storm!" Then we would catch the rhythmic beat and know our thunder storm was only a York boat.

The crew of our boat, like the crews in all the York boats afloat, was composed of mighty men, the pick of the river men of the North; great stalwart Indians in the prime of their manhood. Only the best, the strongest and most efficient were chosen by the Hudson's Bay Company to man the York boat brigades, for these boats carried valuable cargoes of trade goods and pelts through all the mighty waterways of the North from Hudson Bay to Edmonton and back.

The boat in which we rode was one the Indians called a "hundred and twenty piece" boat. They counted the freight carried by "pieces," each piece weighing eighty pounds. The usual standard of weight was an 80 lb. chest of tea. Add to this the weight of the boats and the crews

Mrs. Boggiss was born at Norway House and lived there until she was 14. Her father was Rev. J. A. Lousley, missionary at nearby Rossville.



York boats under sail. From a woodcut by W. J. Phillips, reproduced by permission of Stovel-Advocate Press.

and one may conceive vaguely the strength and endurance of the eight men, who forced the boats forward against swiftly running water and seething, boulder strewn rapids and often dragged them across the rocky portage trails. Little wonder our crew men smiled when the wind whipped away the mists, and Mokhoman called to them to ship dripping oars and step the mast. The great, square sail was unfurled to the wind, and gratefully the men stretched themselves out on the bales or along the thwarts, lit their pipes and relaxed.

For hours we sailed with a fair wind, the York boat riding the waves easily until on the air was borne a sound—a low murmur. Quickly each man rose from his reclining position, scanned the shore for landmarks and immediately took his place at his oar again. The low murmur grew rapidly to a steady rumble, then dropped to a deep, roaring thunder as the water ahead darkened and flattened into a smooth ribbon. Swiftly it sped to leap and churn against the jagged boulders in the narrowing gorge ahead.

Always before, when travelling in our canoes we had had to portage these rapids, but because of their size and bulk the York boats could "shoot" many of the rapids which normally had to be portaged by smaller craft; yet how small our huge craft seemed when caught and drawn deeply in the grip of the swirling, boiling water of the rapids. It churned around us, dragging greedily at the boat. We watched Mokhoman. His eagle eyes were fixed steadily ahead. They missed nothing. Even before the lookout in the bow called his warning he seemed to sense each hidden danger. His whole body was tense as wet sinew and the spray glistened on his bronzed arms and shoulders. With infinite skill he steered his course through the apparently invisible channel between the fanged rocks and whirling eddies, and guided us safely through the hungry breakers out into the peace and quiet of still waters again.

At the foot of the rapids we made camp for the night.

In many places along the Nelson, deep pot-like holes have been worn in the limestone rock by the action of the water swirling small rocks round and round. Through the centuries the water has receded, leaving these holes above the water level. Some are small, some very large. The Indians call them "We-sa-ka-chak's Kettles." We-sa-ka-chak is the fabulous, central figure in many of their legends.

There were some of these kettles where we camped this night. The Indians filled one with water, then dropped in heated rocks until the water boiled. But my brother and I were not quite convinced that mere humans should use We-sa-ka-chak's Kettles without permission. We treated these places with caution and explored with fear and trembling mixed with a delightful apprehension. We never really knew when we might come upon We-sa-ka-chak, though the Indians told us that now for many years he had slept and only their fathers and their fathers' fathers had talked with him. Still, perhaps the sound of the York boat had disturbed his rest! Who knew? Our Indians said he could lift the massive boat and crush it between his hands as easily as Mokhoman broke the match he used to light his pipe. But our great York boat floated on its way again in the morning without our having caught a glimpse of anything more gigantic than the boat itself.

No longer do these ponderous giants rumble their way down the Nelson and across the vast northern waterways. No longer do we hear the booming explosion of their oars, nor the voices of their crews lifted in laughter and song. With their passing has gone a great deal of the romance of our untamed North. The last of the huge manpowered, Hudson's Bay freighters lies now, its voyaging ended, on the banks of the historic Red River at Lower Fort Garry, preserved by the Hudson's Bay Company to bask in fame and glory.

Ships and boats of any kind have a living quality. Though inert on shore, afloat they seem ready to meet whatever comes—fair weather or foul. And so I like to think that the last York boat in its last trip down Lake Winnipeg, brought with it dreams and memories to keep it company. Memories of stalwart, dark skinned men; of laughter and singing; of campfires and evening stars. I know it will remember evergreen forests, long portages, and seething cauldrons of "white water." But longest of all will it remember the rushing mighty rivers singing the song of waters that will never be stilled. ◆

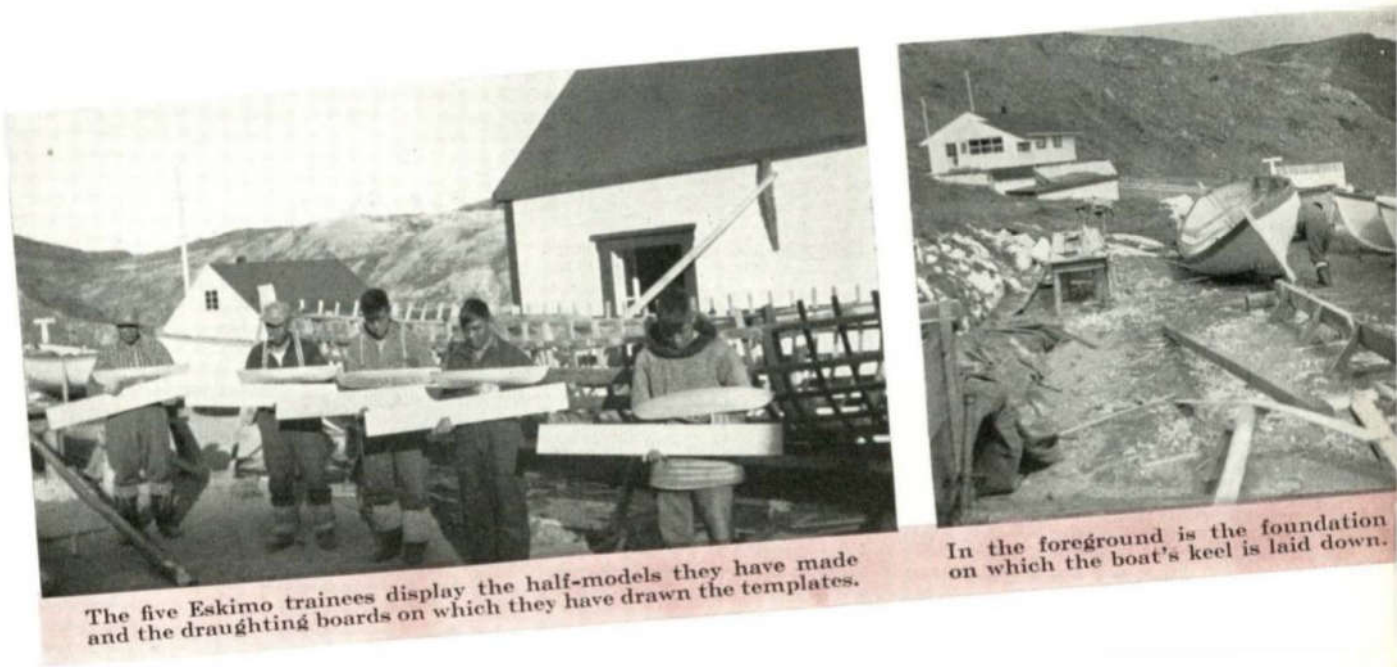
Photos by G. Rennie and J. H. Thorpe

Boat-building Eskimos

by Peter A. C. Nichols

An expert boat builder from Nova Scotia has been teaching Eskimos at Lake Harbour how to build their own whale-boats. This year he is going to show them how to build a thirty-five foot decked "Peterhead."

IN the early days of the fur trade, boat building used to be an important operation at some of the larger posts. York boats and large freight canoes which plied the trade routes of river, lake and sea, were all built locally under the supervision of skilled boat builders with the assistance of native labour who, in turn, learned the specialized work and themselves became boat builders in their own right. The descendants of these original native craftsmen are to be found in Hudson Bay today and, while their boat building activities are now limited to a canoe factory at Rupert's House, others have branched off into different forms of carpentry such as cabinet making and house building.



The five Eskimo trainees display the half-models they have made and the draughting boards on which they have drawn the templates.

In the foreground is the foundation on which the boat's keel is laid down.

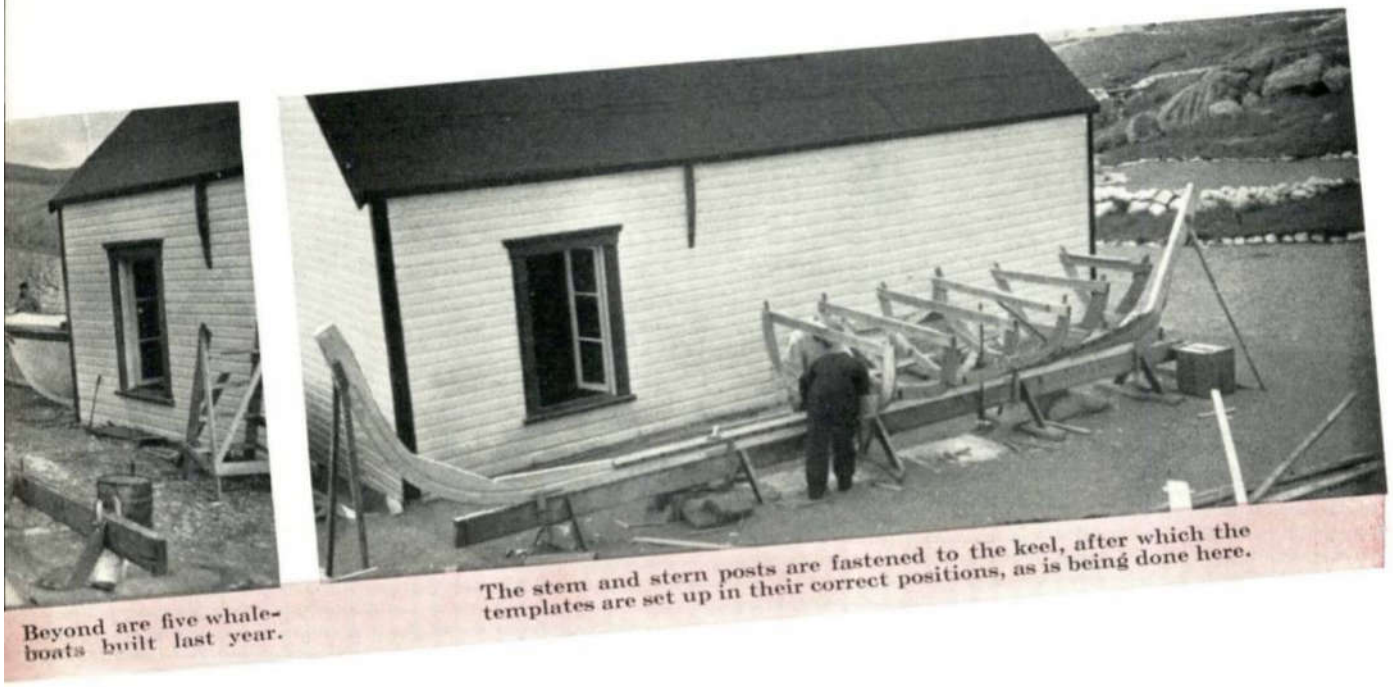
The decline in local boat-building around Hudson Bay was due largely to the increased size of modern supply ships which could carry anything up to a forty-foot schooner, or Peterhead boat, on deck. Until about ten years ago, building costs "outside" were reasonable, and it was therefore more advantageous and cheaper for the Eskimo to have the boats built "outside" and delivered to the arctic posts. Since the close of World War II, however, rising boat-building costs and increased freight rates have made the cost of an imported boat almost prohibitive for most Eskimos. The time was ripe therefore to consider a revival of the boat-building industry in the country. It is no longer feasible for Eskimos to revert to their kyaks and skin boats for hunting purposes. If they can build their own boats in the country at a reduced labour cost, the resulting savings will be passed on to them, and this essential item of hunting equipment will still be available for their use.

In the early spring of 1951 the Department of Resources and Development (now the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources), in a move to create work

for the Eskimo to help them help themselves, suggested that a boat building experiment be tried out at Lake Harbour, and that the government would sponsor it to the extent of covering the expenses of the shipwright and his Eskimo helpers during the latters' training period. Subsequently material for five whaleboats was shipped to Lake Harbour, and in April 1952 J. H. Thorpe, shipwright, was flown to Frobisher Bay. He then attempted to reach Lake Harbour by dog team, but owing to a very early break-up of the rivers and lakes, he couldn't get through and was forced to return to Frobisher Bay. The boat building project was deferred for a year. The following April he again flew to Frobisher Bay and this time successfully reached Lake Harbour by dog team.

Mr. Thorpe, from Scott's Bay, Kings County, Nova Scotia, learned his trade as a shipwright in the days of sail, when wooden vessels built in Nova Scotia could be found all over the world where stout ships sailed the seas. He joined the Company's service in 1934 as a shipwright in the Mackenzie River Division of the Transport Department and ever since has been employed repairing and building boats in the Western Arctic and Mackenzie River areas and constructing post buildings for the fur trade. Mr. Thorpe built the *Margaret A*, a vessel of 100 tons used on the Mackenzie River and later in the Western Arctic; he also built Spence Bay post and wintered alone with the Eskimo at that point during 1948-49. He has the remarkable faculty of making himself understood by the Eskimo while having very little knowledge of their language. For this reason and because of his patience and sympathetic attitude, he is well qualified to instruct them.

Five Eskimo trainees were employed at Lake Harbour under Mr. Thorpe's tutelage. Napatchee, Noah and Kapee from Lake Harbour, and Sheookjuke and Davidie from Cape Dorset. The latter two Eskimo travelled with their families from Cape Dorset by dog team and were on hand to receive instructions when Mr. Thorpe arrived at Lake Harbour. The instructions started with each trainee making a wooden block half-model of a whaleboat cut to the required scale of the boat when finished. Next the drafting of the model on paper and the forming of the template of both sides of the boat which are set at certain stations on the keel according to the drafting. All the foregoing work was done by each individual Eskimo and up to this point the actual construction on the boat had not begun. It was important for the Eskimo trainees to know the mechanics of drafting a boat from the model on to paper before the wood work was started on the boat.



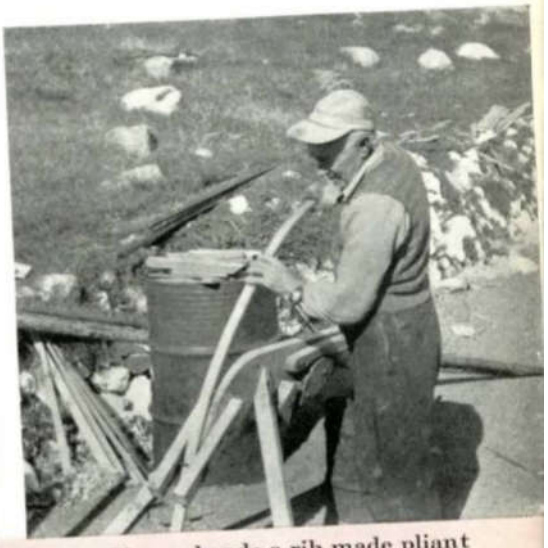
Beyond are five whaleboats built last year.

The stem and stern posts are fastened to the keel, after which the templates are set up in their correct positions, as is being done here.

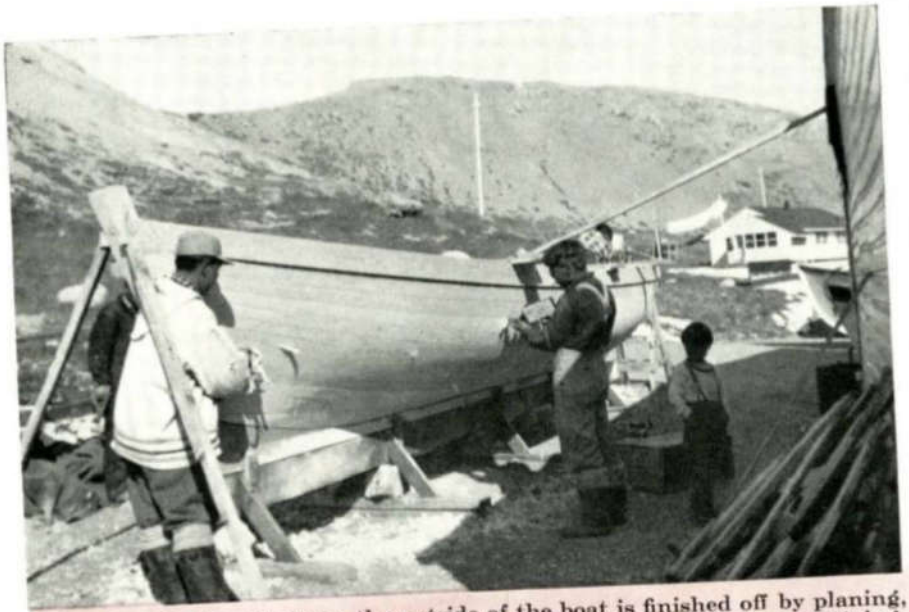
The construction of a boat begins with the laying of the keel to which are fastened the templates in their correct positions, and around these the ribbons are bent fore and aft. The oak ribs are then bent inside and fastened to the keel and gunwale and to the bilge keelson. After the ribs are in place, planking is nailed to them. The finishing off process includes caulking, priming with paint, puttying and completing the inside with lining, and thwarts laid out to suit the trim of the boat.

During the five-month period spent by Mr. Thorpe at Lake Harbour, five whaleboats were built with the Eskimo. These boats were 27 feet long and had an 8-foot beam and 3-foot depth midships. The boats were fully equipped for sailing and were sheathed on the bow with metal for use in ice. Mr. Thorpe spoke very highly of his Eskimo helpers and felt sure that they could, with very little additional training, build boats for themselves. •

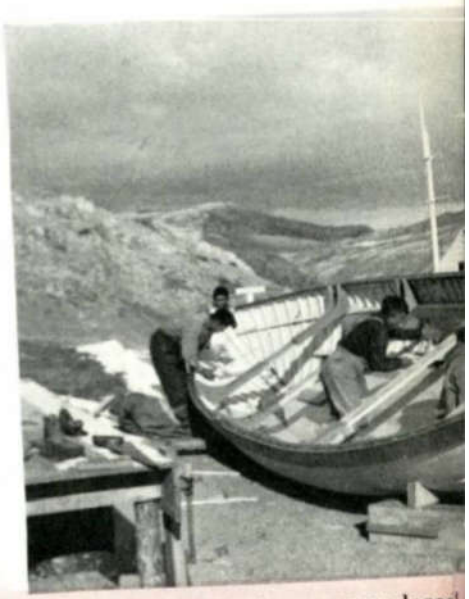
The ribbons are then fastened around the templates. On the right is the firewood brought over from Fort Chimo to heat the steam box.



J. H. Thorpe bends a rib made pliant in the steam box around a mould.



When the planking is done, the outside of the boat is finished off by planing, caulking the seams with oakum, priming with paint, and then puttying.

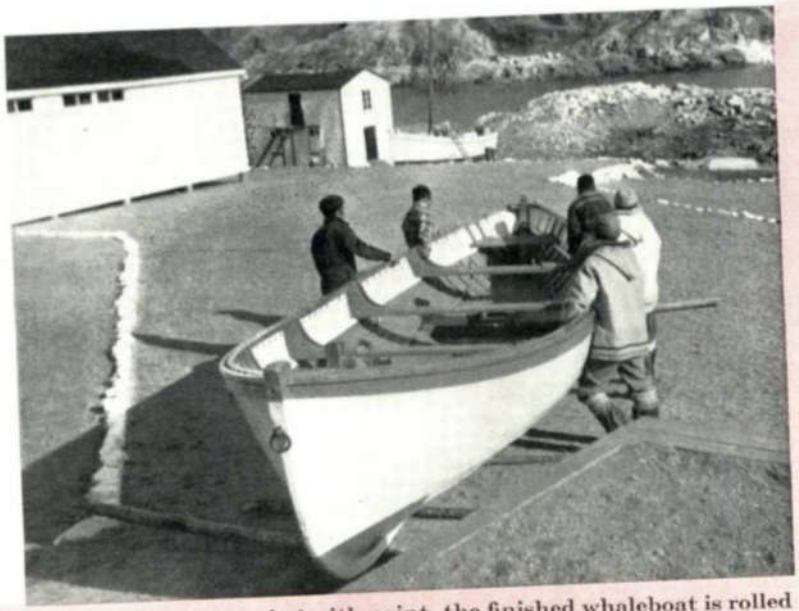


The thwarts or seats are now placed in position to suit the trim of the

The oak ribs are now placed inside the ribbons and fastened in place.

With the ribs in place, the templates are removed, and the builders start to bend the planking around the ribs and remove the ribbons.

boat, and the inside is completed with spruce lining, then painted.



Brand new and gleaming with paint, the finished whaleboat is rolled down to the sea and launched by her five proud Eskimo builders.

SUMMER PACKET

Other Eclipses

While working on Mrs. Knox's article dealing with the solar eclipse of 1860, we found some interesting post-journal entries on that subject going back to 1724. In that year the Albany Fort journal on the west coast of James Bay records an eclipse on May 11 (Old Style) lasting about an hour altogether. On May 14 (O.S.) 1751 "an eclipse of ye sun" is noted in the Churchill journal. "It came on at ½ past 7 [p.m.] and was not over till near 9 totall."

Fifteen years later at Albany, on August 5, Humphrey Marten wrote: "At eleven OClock A.M. observed the Sun to be Eclipsed, the greatest darkness at Five Minutes before twelve when nine parts out of the twelve was hid from us . . . it was through a small Camp Tellescope that I viewed the eclipse which ended at the Suns SE. limb."

In 1774 the eclipse at Albany took on a more awesome aspect. Marten records that on June 25, for two and a half hours around midday "we were immersed in almost total darkness, at times the whole vault of heaven appeared in flames, at other times to glow with fire like those of a furnace or glass house. At 3 P.M. it cleared up without doing us any damage."

And for the information of the skeptical, we might add that this was the year *before* the first shipment of Hudson's Bay rum. . . .

Johnny Berens

Johnny Berens, famed Mackenzie River pilot, died on March 25 at Fort Smith, aged 82, after serving the Company for over 60 years. With him went much of the lore of the River, for his memories of the Mackenzie, of the boats that plied it, and the men who worked them, went back into the 1870s. That was long before the first steamers made their appearance, even on the upper river.

His father, Samuel Berens, had been born in the Red River Settlement about 1829 and had watched the building of Lower Fort Garry. He came out to Fort Simpson at the junction of the Mackenzie and the Liard in the 1860s and there in 1871 young John was born. At the age of 15 he started to work for the Hudson's Bay Company, first as carpenter's helper, then as a cook, and later he worked on the building of the *Wrigley*, first steamer on the lower river, which was launched in 1886.

His service as a pilot did not begin until 1900, on the second *Wrigley*. Later he piloted the *McKenzie River* and the *Distributor*, and he used to look back with pride on the fact that he was pilot on the larger boat when she took two Governors-General down north to Aklavik—Baron Byng of Vimy and Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield. His knowledge of the changing river currents, and his uncanny ability to read the surface signs that told him of shifting shoals and sandbars and hidden obstacles, were of immense service, especially during shipping seasons when time-saving was all-important—such as the "Canol" summer of 1942.

In time Johnny Berens will become a northern legend. His famous stories, that he told so picturesquely, will be passed on from generation to generation. But always there will be something lacking—the inimitable style he lent to the telling of them. Though some of them belong in the realm of the fabulous, they are part of the lore of the Mackenzie, to be told for many years to come around glowing stoves of a winter's night, or by campfires beside the mighty river he knew so well.

Summer Beaver

With this issue, beginning Outfit 285, the names of the four *Beavers* will be changed. Instead of June, September, December and March, they will be known as Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring. This, then, is the first Summer *Beaver*—though at the time these words are being written in the month of May, with a north wind howling down Winnipeg's Main Street, and drifts of snow still lingering in the shadows, it seems rather ridiculous to call it that. However, by the time this issue appears, the thermometer may be flirting with the 90s, and summer may be upon us.

NORTHERN BOOKS

Nahanni Country

THE DANGEROUS RIVER, by R. M. Patterson. Thos. Nelson & Sons, Toronto and George Allen and Unwin, London, 1954. 260 pages.

Reviewed by P. G. Downes

MANY readers of the June 1947 and June 1952 issues of the *Beaver* must have entertained hopes that the author of two tantalizing articles in those issues would one day expand his reminiscences of the Nahanni country into a book. It would be difficult indeed to name an area in the North more exciting to the imagination and more challenging to investigation and factual report than the South Nahanni river with its mountain- and canyon-guarded drainage basin. This hope has now been satisfied, partially at least, with Mr. Patterson's book concerning his extraordinary adventures in this area over a period of several years.

The South Nahanni river cutting deep into the Mackenzie Mountains, from whence it flows into the Liard adjacent to the Yukon-Northwest Territories divide, has long supplied the mystery, speculation, rumour, glamour and wonder which more easily traversed and consequently more prosaic portions of the North have steadily lost. Indeed one might venture that, as if in over-compensation, this relatively inaccessible area gained disproportionately until it achieved enough unworldliness to foster a highly imaginative novel, tales of tropical valleys, mysterious and dangerous Indians, headless trappers and nuggets of gold—all the improvisations of romance that an increasingly disillusioned generation, suckled on Jack London, James Oliver Curwood and Robert Service, found themselves losing.

This situation, at least in the public eye, remained constant though with increasing magnification well into the 1930s, and in fact, it is only with the author's present publication that any truly comprehensive laying of these sensational ghosts has been accomplished.

The narrative concerns the author's several penetrations of this area, in 1927 and later with a companion, Gordon Matthews, in 1928-29. With honesty and admirable frankness, Mr. Patterson reveals himself as an able and remarkably fortunate wilderness traveller. The inviolable isolation of this region and its accompanying mystery have essentially resulted from the difficulty and hazards of transportation up the river, and the paucity of Indians resident in that area. The narrative backbone is the factual record of the author's struggle with the former, and the title, *The Dangerous River* is eminently appropriate. The physical battle itself is told with such detail that this reader for one breathed a sigh of relief that Mr. Patterson ever got out alive. There is a wealth of technical description of the mechanisms and stratagems used to defeat the river, some of them further explained by line-drawings. The accompanying photographs suggest the grandeur and extraordinary character of the country. One regrets the absence of a large-scale map. But it is such a wild, incredible region of topographic superlatives, that it is doubtful whether anything short of the living experience itself can remotely do justice to it.

While laying ghosts, however, it certainly must be time to intern the fiction of Hudson's Bay Company officers of old customarily travelling in the grand manner (p. 230) "looking like the traditional Mr. Noah of the Ark or Czar of all the Russias." Any study of the travelling habits of the vast majority of the early Company adventurers of accomplishment from Henday, Tomison and Cocking through Hearne, Turnor, Fidler to Rae quite thoroughly demolishes that as other than an isolated and atypical instance.

In resumé, this is an exciting, virile, technically absorbing account of a skilful and courageous feat of northern travel, unique in locale with a valuable setting-right of a previously tortured record. As a final triumph, how many readers can put this down without wishing Mr. Patterson would poke into the same region again for them?

Mr. Downes is a northern traveller of considerable experience, and the author of Sleeping Island.

Whisky Traders

THE WHOOP-UP TRAIL: Early Days in Alberta-Montana; by Gerald L. Berry. Applied Art Products, Ltd., Edmonton, 1953. 143 pages.

Reviewed by F. G. Roe

THIS is basically the author's thesis for the M.A. degree; a choice for which Mr. Perry is to be warmly commended, especially when one considers the aridly-abstract character of some such productions. The reviewer has renewed several old acquaintances in these pages, although many others are of course too old for one who only came to Alberta in 1894. Some of the whisky-running fraternity, the men who gave Fort Whoop-up its name and (ill) fame, were scarcely of the famous men whom we are enjoined to praise; but they effected at least one good thing in their lives. They enabled better men to spur a somewhat apathetic bureaucracy in Ottawa to the establishment of the Mounted Police; perhaps the most potent single force in determining the character of Western Canadian civilization—a chapter in the history of civilization itself, certainly for this continent.

Dr. Roe, Albertan historian, is chiefly known for his monumental The North American Buffalo.

The book suggests one major comment, which is not intended in any sense as a criticism upon the author. Compiled within the narrow limits imposed by a Master's thesis (both in volume and in available time for its preparation), the canvas is so crowded with personalities and incidents that—to change the metaphor—one can scarcely see the wood for the trees. This has resulted, inevitably, in a "Short History" scale of treatment, with virtually no larger historical presentation existing for fuller information. As in the case of Bancroft's works, for example, much of the source-material for a definitive local history of these early eras often consists of uncritical reminiscence, which demands a vigilant comparative criticism from an editor at all times. Mr. Berry recognizes the need for this, and the book presents evidence of its exercise; but sheer space has precluded many of its *cruces* from receiving really adequate treatment. For this large-scale treatment, the author's bibliography could be considerably enlarged. Some of the omissions from the list were surprising, notably Prof. C. M. MacInnes's history of Southern Alberta, *In The Shadow of The Rockies* (1930). The book carries such gratifying evidences of factual research that it really deserves to be amplified in the manner here suggested; and one would judge that no one is likely to make a better job of it than Mr. Berry himself. The book includes one or two very informative sketch-maps; and a considerable number of reproductions of early photographs, which have not emerged any too successfully from the process.

Northern Symposium

NORTH OF 55°, Canada from the 55th Parallel to the Pole. Edited by Clifford Wilson. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1951. 192 pages and 32 pages illustrations. Maps.

Reviewed by R. M. Patterson

THE Ryerson Press has had the happy idea of asking the editor of the *Beaver*, to gather under one cover sixteen articles on the Canadian Northland, each by a specialist in his own department. The result is the first comprehensive guide and reference book on things northern to be written for the layman, and one that any man who contemplates a journey or a business venture into the higher latitudes would do well to consult.

The book is not planned as a work of art, but is rather a collection of facts attractively and easily presented. As one gathers from the editor's foreword, the various articles can give, for reasons of space, necessarily only an outline of their subjects—but it is nevertheless one which will lead, in the case of those interested, to more detailed enquiry and sources.

If a layman may express a preference for one star, or two among so many (and here let us remember Ouida's famous words: "They all rowed fast but none so fast as stroke"), it would be for Mr. Porsild's pleasing and informed "Flowers and Forests," Mr. Leechman's "Men of The Woodlands" and Mr. Copland's "Men of the Barrens." And in this connection one may mention the photographs—a technically excellent and most informative collection. But the prime duty of a photograph in a book is to be an illustration; and as a group, with the meaning of each picture clear even without any title, the photographs which illustrate the fur trade seem to take first place. Those, and the old Indian lady at the meat-drying rack, the dog team travelling through the timberline country, and the utter desolation expressed in the picture of the flying boat against the background of some arctic mountain.

Several maps—including a folding map of the whole area, and a beautifully drawn physiographic map—also serve to illustrate the text.

Certain of the chapters are completely factual, such as "Transport Today" by Colonel Croft; others are to a certain extent controversial, or at least open to questioning, and amongst these one may place Grant MacEwan's "Food from the Soil." George Simpson, writing from Lake Athabasca in his first Canadian winter, mentions Fort Liard as a possible garden spot. But only in a high-wage community such as Yellowknife is a *tour de force* possible that involves air transit for hay; and it is easy to build too much and too swiftly on the feats of experimental farms which are set in favoured places and have a backing that is not available to the individual.

In chapters so short as these, it would seem that there should be no errors in fact. A geographer (page 18) has missed the destination of the Rocky Mountain Trench by two states: Montana, not Washington receives that tremendous valley from British Columbia. In the chapter on fishing: the Mackenzie River (page 102) is *not* a clear stream in summertime below its confluence with the Liard—i.e. for some 800 miles—and its muddy waters could support no commercial fishery. The fishing (page 100) is not good around the trading posts; at Wrigley a net will seldom feed a dog team; the fishery for Fort Simpson is at Wrigley Harbour and from Aklavik one must go down to Tent Island.

The emphasis of a number of chapters is on publicity and progress—and here one recognises the white man's devotion to his fetish of development, his inability to let anything or anybody alone. In all this nobody has asked the question—are we fit to "develop" the North, or have the changes and the inventions of two great wars thrown it open before its time and to a people unready? Far to the south we can see the American dust bowl, the ruin of great sections of the Canadian prairies and the destruction of the forests by a civilisation which takes over a quarter section (160 acres) of woodland to make one Sunday issue of the *New York Times*. Let us hope that no one inspired by this instructive book to take a hand in the opening up of the North will ever use the fatal word "inexhaustible."

Mr. Patterson is known to Beaver *readers through his articles on northern canoe travel—and as the author of* The Dangerous River.

HUDSON'S BAY

Leisure Wear

in a wide range of authentic tartans and plain shades

light weight
hand washable
fine imported fabric
superbly tailored

for men and women

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